No.11 FEB 1985 85p

THE GAMER

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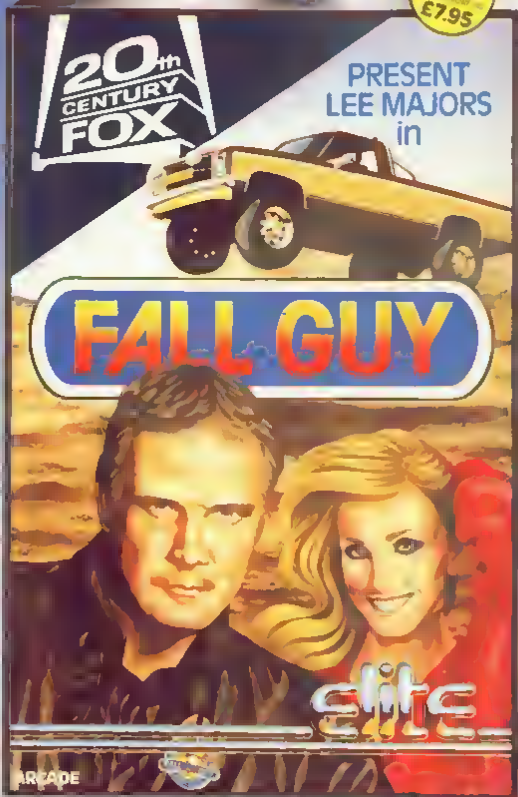

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48K Spectrum and Commodore 64

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PRESS FOR MAIN MENU

Well we finally did it Went on-line Grabbed a piece of the telecommunications revolution Sold out to Prestel Whatever you like What this means is we bought ourselves a slice of Micronet – not the first computer mag to do so sure and you bet we won t be the last However anybody out there – and there may be as many as 150,000 of you – who wants to get in touch do so Our mailbox is on the masthead

Actually it wasn't that easy Here's a snatch of the vital dialogue

Editor We want to go on Micronet
Publisher No chance
Editor This object in my hand is a baseball bat
Publisher Start next week OK?

Needless to say there s a lot of other nets we want to subscribe to Compunet BrotherNet the list is endless Wave of the future? Well, one of them that s for sure Pity about the word Modem though Ugly No soul Can anybody think of a better one? If you can write – no, wait! Mailbox us Save a tree!

Speaking of which, you've no doubt noticed a new branch to our logo with this issue TV Gamer has joined forces with BIG K to further the cause of funwere for the masses Welcome indeed to all TV Gamer readers who are experiencing the BIG K style for the first time Nice here, innit?

TONY TYLER

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Design a game and win an Amstrad CPC 464

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System 3 Software

JACK HITS THE MASSES

BIG JACK Tramiel head honcho of the new look Atari Corporation blew into London one weekday December. "I've just come to meet you guys" he growled at the huddled, dropping masses of the computer press assembled to see him. BIG K's then mere huddled and dropping than most was there.

Big Jack fired his plans for Atari at his audience in a machine-gun style. "I'm gonna [illegible] a new line of computers for the masses." "I've invested [illegible] of my own money in this operation and we're looking to make $150m by the summer of 85." "MSX? It's a very nice machine." "I don't compete with IBM, I build computers for the masses."

These masses will be seeing if Jack has put his money where his mouth is later this month at the giant Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas when four [illegible] of Atari products will be revealed.

The first will be the video games division still centered around the VCS. The new 7800 (see BIG K No 5) has been scrapped.

Early 2 will be a line of 8-bit machines comprising 48K, 64K, 128K music and portable machines. The 800XL survives with new styling and all software compatible with it.

A new 16-bit machine featuring the 68000 processor and high-grade graphics comes in, presumably to challenge Apple's highly successful Macintosh. It will have a new operating system developed by Atari and Digital Research and will also contain GEM, DR's Macintosh WIMP (Windows, Icons, Menus, Pointers) system.

Top of the family tree will be a line of 32-bit "Workstations" for professional users featuring CAD/CAM capabilities.

Atarisoft will continue to convert software for other micros and will also be used as an outlet for peripherals. Video game ROMs will comprise about 10% of the market in 1985.

Big Jack had a few kind words for the country he was visiting. The U.K. is one of the strongest countries of development software, he said. Atari will be looking for a lot more software from outside [illegible] the [illegible] else.

Tramiel blew out of town leaving the huddled masses in no more doubt that 1985 will see Atari heavily on the offensive, eager to restore its tarnished name and image. BIG K's man still dropping on the luxury shag pile of the conference hotel will [illegible]

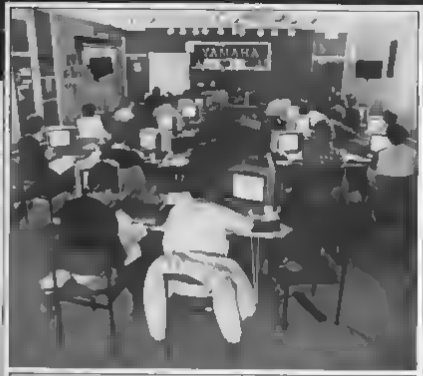
"EUREKA" CRIES THE WORLD

EUREKA! the multi-part arcade/adventure game with the 25,000 quid in medieval prize, is set to become a worldwide hit. Already the game written by adventure craftsmen Ian Livingstone and programmed by Hungarian software house Andromeda, has been converted into French and German editions. *Eureka!* publishers Domark have already got deals lined up with the U.S.A., Canada, New Zealand and South Africa. Even Hungary is in line for its own edition.

50,000 copies of the game have sold in Britain alone, 11,000 have gone to France and a further 50,000 will be shipped to America next month. The French edition has been converted for the Oric (through Domark have no plans to market an Oric edition here) and contains some changes to the game—the French have put up a separate 200,000F prize to the first person to solve the mystery of *Eureka!* Otherwise, the rest of the world are competing for the same £25,000 which, unless claimed by December 31st this year, will be shared out amongst those who came closest.

Domark has already been besieged by pleas for help. One man even claimed his son's interest in history has been transformed [illegible] and his schoolwork improved dramatically.

As for what will follow *Eureka!*, Domark would say little other than they had a "Bigger" lined up for this summer.



Smile-cased computer journalists caught in the process of learning—refuse to show their features.

REALLY, WE DO OUR BEST, HONEST . . .

YAMAHA CLAIMED that the new computer/synthesiser is such an advanced concept that everyone should go on one of the training courses before they can use it.

That includes journalists, who are not going any review machines until we seek enlightenment.

This much we know: the new machine, the CX5M, is an MSX machine coupled with a music synthesiser, a MIDI interface to connection to other musical instruments, and a separate music keyboard. It's only a 32K machine but in addition to the regular Gl chip specified by MSX it contains a more advanced model used in the DX9 range of synthesisers. It also uses a [illegible] EBOX [illegible] to do [illegible] your greenbacks.

As for the educational aspects, Gosha Skank editor of the best selling magazine *A Small Rodent's Guide to East European Sewers*, comments: "With my extensive ranging, extended lunch break commitment, I just don't have the time to do this sort of thing. Besides, I know everything about computers, aren't they those pieces of souls who turn up to work regularly?"

Seriously, considering that the field of computing is flowing with systems that can be understood with a minimum of documentation, such as the amazing Apple Macintosh, set it a bit backwards looking to expect people [illegible] before [illegible]

BOOTS IN MSX BLUNDER

OXFORD STREET wasn't the only road in London to be lit-up by bright lights this Christmas. Had you wandered down Fleet Street you might have noticed the bright red glow of embarrassed faces. Somehow the price of the Toshiba MSX micro featured in the Boots advertisement which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Guardian* had been cut by a hefty £100.

Fleet Street's Gremlins beat Spielberg's by a couple of days, altering the cost of the Japanese micro from the standard £279 to an attractive £179. At that price even the most dubious hackers might be tempted to dip a hand/kitten too in the MSX waters.

Disappointed customers were being told by Boots staff that it is a mistake, and that they were sorry but the £279 price tag stays. Maybe they would feel happier if they were told that Boots' advertising department was queuing up for a mass ritual suicide.

HACK IN LUCKY DIP DRAMA

THE MUSIC BIZ made a pounce on the software biz last before Christmas Melodsoft stepdaughter of Music Records set new standards for pizazz when it invited 16 million thirsty hacks to a majestic launch thrash in London's West End. Melodsoft are majoring on US buy ins — heading the debut list is the CBM version of *Lode Runner*. they also present such other American classics as *Murder on the Zinderneuf*, *M U L E*, *Spelunker*, *Realm of Impossibility* and the venerable *Choplifter!* all initially on CBM 64 though conversions will follow shortly.

To celebrate their arrival in the snakepit Melodsoft organised a prize draw. And guess what? First prize — a CBM S 64 luggable — went to the Oliver Hardy lookalike in the picture none other than BIG K. Ass Ed Richard Burton (That's him second from right eyes a glitter with lust!)

BIG K: Frankly I'm over the moon with regard to this one. How much do you reckon I could get for it?

LAST GASP FOR THE VIDEO ROM?

WITH THE news that both Parker and Coleco are pulling out of the dedicated video game cartridge biz in the country, the party looks to be all but over for the video game freak. The computer is king. These antique-looking consoles with their gaping ROM slots are just a thing of the past. Only Atari remains to support its ageing VCS system.

A spokesman for Parker Video told BIG K that the decision to withdraw from the British market was taken in the U S where the parent company is based. Parker were All ready to go with a line of computer conversions of their top-selling titles when the plug was pulled. Earlier last year the company had announced a tone of ROMs for Sinclair's ZX Interface II (see Big K No 2) but these never saw the light of day.

However three of Parker's most recent releases for the Atari 2600 VCS will be available in Britain through a special arrangement with the Slough-based Silica Shop. *Frogger 2*, *Three Deep*, *Star Wars – The Arcade Game* and *Gyruss* can all be obtained through Silica who purchased the entire consignment of the new games. Marketing Manager John Arundel told BIG K that the exclusive distribution deal meant that the games could be sold for £12.95 each as opposed to the £34.95 price tag that Parker put on all previous releases.

In addition to the Parker trio Silica have added *Pooyan*, *Strategy X* and *Marine Wars* to their range of over 200 VCS ROMs. The latter three came from Gakken and retail at £9.95 for *Pooyan* and £8.95 for the other two. Silica Shop can be contacted on 01-309 1111.

BBC UNDERWATER SERVICE

The world of computing can now claim the biggest [illegible] shake down since the Ag[illegible]'s Day broadcast about [illegible] tissue or H G Well's radio play *War of the Worlds*.

Answering what he believed to be a spoof 'error message' query on his *Micro User* problem page Mike Cook quipped 'Take your computer immediately back to the dealer as the error message indicates that it is about to explode.'

Some readers did not see the joke. Dealers certainly didn't, in the weeks that followed hundreds of BBCs were flung onto shop counters up and down the country whilst once proud owners beat hasty retreats pale-faced and sweating. And the strange thing was that they all had their fingers wedged firmly into their ears.

Finally the dealers twigged the score when one customer stayed long enough to explain — a customer holding a large pail of water containing an Acorn BBC Model B computer. Some people will believe anything they read . . .

INTERCEPTOR TAKE ON THE MIDDLEMEN

HEARD ABOUT a great new game but couldn't find it for sale anywhere? Before you curse the software house involved stop and think. Chances are you're victim of one of the many distributors around — these useless middlemen that actually control what reaches the shelves of your friendly neighbourhood software store. At least that's how Interceptor Software amongst many other companies see the situation. They are apparently frustrated by being squeezed out of the way by the middle guys' of the games industry.

To counter this and get their product out to a wider audience Interceptor have launched their own software club. Members receive new titles automatically each month and if they buy get another game from Interceptor's catalogue absolutely free. There are also newsletters, posters and other special offers. Formed in September the club now has 10,000 members by

Interceptor told Big K that their mail order sales had gone up dramatically in recent months a response they claimed that was a direct result of punters being unable to find a wide selection of games through the major retail outlets. Unless distribution is improved they told us many small companies will face a bleak 1985.

In an unrelated incident Interceptor is helping all those Commodore hackers who are having problems loading turbo-assisted programs due to bad tape head alignment. The Azimuth Head Alignment Tape costs £7.95 and comes complete with a manual and screwdriver. The user loads the program and uses the on screen instructions to adjust the tape head position of the cassette unit with the screwdriver (sounds like a recipe for chaos to us).

If you want to find out more about this or the software club, Interceptor can be contacted at Linden House, The Green, [illegible]

WHEN THE WRITS HIT THE FAN . . .

ATARI ARE going in for the kill on plagiarism of their games. The first company to tremble under the threat of the judge's hammer are MRM Software. Atari observed that MRM's game *Castle of Gems* bore quite a lot more than a passing resemblence to their own *Crystal Castles*. Atari claim to have lost substantial sales ' in the past due to copyright infringements. And holding exclusive rights to classic games such as *Donkey Kong*, *Pac Man*, *Defender* and *Pole Position*, who can blame them?

Does their latest move presage the smassing of the Atari White Army across the vast game-snaffling wasteland under the leadership of new General Schlemel?

Yes say Atari's P R. This is just one of the changes we're seeing under the new philosophy ' Atari wouldn't disclose their exact line of fire — but our guess is that many sits the ears that are burning and many are the unsaleable copies that soon will be.

The writs are also down for Ocean for whom Elite have shown no mercy — only stunning alacrity in binding Ocean with restraining legal chains immediately upon the release of *Airwolf*.

Elite have the official licence to create a computer game based on the TV series *The Hit* following their success with *The Fall Guy* conversion. The town wasn't big enough for the two of em and while one of them leaves series two of *The Hit* is due to be broadcast next month.

AMERICAN DREDD HITS BRIT-CIT!

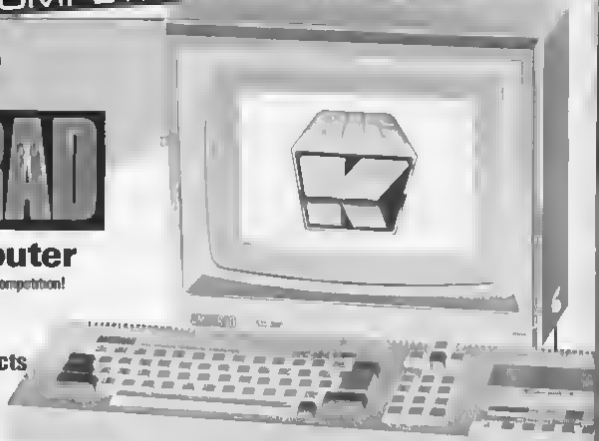
Judge Dredd, 2000 AD's top cop of the future, will now be dispensing justice monthly at a newsagent near you. The ***Judge Dredd Monthly*** is a 32-page colour comic featuring classic Judge Dredd adventures from the 2000 AD memory banks. Previously sold only in America, the ***Judge Dredd Monthly*** costs 60p and goes on sale in this country from issue number 15. Adventures in No 15 include Block War (Prog 182), Umpty Candy (Prog 145) and The Ape Gang (Prog 39).

JUDGE DREDD MONTHLY ON SALE NOW-PRICE 60p

WIN AN AMSTRAD

CPC464 Computer

in our super BIG K/Software Projects Competition!



5 Runners-up win the complete Software Projects Catalogue for Amstrad and Spectrum!

HOW MANY times have you bought an arcade game, loaded and played it and thought 'Great!' but if only I could do this or that to make it better! Or perhaps got frustrated because the third screen was 'impossible' and you'll never see the other 47?

SOFTWARE PROJECTS have produced the player's dream: a great all action arcade game which YOU can change. Bored with having only five lives? Okay, have more. Don't like the order of screens? Alter them.

You move around screens using ladders and drilling through barriers to collect treasures. Meanwhile you're being chased. Can you succeed where others fail and move on to the next screen? Can you get on to the hi score table? Play it and see.

The game is LODERUNNER and is available for the Spectrum 48K at £9.95. We have only mentioned a few of the features. Read on and find out more! And just look what you could win if you enter our simple competition!

HOW TO ENTER

We have listed eight features of the fantastic new game by Software Projects, Loderunner.

What we want you to do for this competition is place them in the order you consider they would most appeal to a computer user seeking value for money.

Write the key letters of the eight factors — in ink — in the spaces on the entry coupon. For example, if you think that 'Joystick/keyboard option' would be the most appealing of them all then put 'B' in the first space. The letter of your next choice goes in the second space, and so on for all eight.

Complete the coupon with your name and address and don't forget to fill in the second coupon if you wish to know more about Software Projects products. Post your completed entry to: BIG K LODERUNNER COMPETITION LONDON SE99 6YP to arrive by the closing date which is Thursday 28th February, 1984.

HOW DO YOU RATE THESE?

A. 150 screens — a mammoth task with plenty of variety.
B. Joystick/Keyboard option.
C. Homing chasers — keeps the pressure on.
D. Highly addictive — tear yourself away if you can!
E. Redesign each screen as you wish — unlimited challenge.
J. Screen progression option if you're stuck.
K. Drill your own escape route — try different ways.
L. All user-design changes can be saved to tape.

ENTRY COUPON

BIG K LODERUNNER COMPETITION

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

In entering this competition you agree to abide by the rules and to accept the publisher's result as final and legally binding.

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

My computer is _____

DO NOT DETACH

I am interested in knowing more about Software Projects products.

Name _____

Address _____

My computer is _____

PLEASE CUT NEATLY AROUND THIS LINE

RULES

[illegible]

The competition is open to all readers in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Eire, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man except employees (and their families) of IPC Magazines Ltd, the printers of BIG K or of Software Projects.

All winners will be notified and the result published in BIG K.

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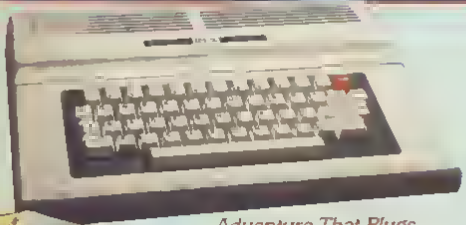
Buzzard Bait £7.95 26-7351

The adventure doesn't end here! See the extensive range of colour software available from Tandy. Some games require Extended BASIC, 32K memory, joysticks. Check with your local store for details.

Mines £7.95 26-7314

Wizards Of Night £7.95 26-7309

Eye Of The Wizard £7.95 26-7310



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See Yellow Pages For Address Of Store Nearest You!

48K SINCLAIR ZX SPECTRUM

"ALIEN 8" recommended retail price £9.95 inc VAT
Available from W.H.SMITHS, BOOTS, J.MENZIES, WOOLWORTHS
and all good software retail outlets. Also available from
ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME, The Green, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire LE6 5JU
(P&P included) Tel: 0530 411485

S·H·A·F·T

HOW TO BE TOPP... at Software reviewing. In a searing expose, FIN FAHEY blows the gaff on BIG K's secret reviewing techniques.

```
  5 GO TO 200
 10 REM ************************
 20 REM Simulated Hacking
 25 REM Allowance Pack
 30 REM Turnover Electronic
 40 REM   Revises (SHAFTER)
 50 REM          by Fin Fahey
 70 REM ************************
 80 REM
 90 REM s/r to truncate string
$
 100 LET n=2
 110 IF x$(n TO n)=" " THEN GO T
O 130
 120 LET n=n+1  GO TO 110
 130 LET y$=x$(1 TO n-1)
 140 RETURN
 187 REM
 188 REM  Start of Program
 186 REM
 200 GO SUB 2000  REM Initialise
 210 GO SUB 3000  REM Menus
 230 GO SUB 400   REM   Ratings
 330 GO SUB 800   REM  Do review
 840 PRINT "Another review(Y/N)?
"
 250 LET x$=INKEY$  IF x$=""  THE
N GO TO 250
 260 IF x$="Y"  OR x$="y" THEN GO
TO 810
 270 IF x$="n"  OR x$="N" THEN GT
OP
 280 GO TO 250
 287 REM
 288 REM  Game name + Maker
 290 REM
 300 LET y=1+INT (RND*n2)  LET x
$=t$(y)  GO SUB 100  LET n$=x$
 305 LET e$=x$
 310 LET x=1+INT (RND*n1).  LET x
$=t$(x)  GO SUB 100  LET n$=n$+
" "+x$
 313 LET x=1+INT (RND*n6)  LET x
$=s$(x)  GO SUB 100  LET e$=e$+
 315 LET x=1+INT (RND*n1)  LET x
$=t$(x)  GO SUB 100  LET e$=e$+
 x$
 320 LET x=1+INT (RND*n3)  LET y
$=h$(x)  GO SUB 100  LET h$=x$
 330 LET x=1+INT (RND*n6)  LET x
$=s$(x)  GO SUB 100  LET h$=h$+x
$
 330 LET x=1+INT (RND*n6)  LET s
$=s$(x)
 340 CLS
 350 PRINT n$
 360 PRINT e$
 380 RETURN
 387 REM
 388 REM        Get ratings
 390 REM
 400 LET gr=INT  (RND*5)+2
 410 IF gr>1 AND INT  (RND*e)>2 T
HEN GO TO 400
 420 IF gr<3 AND INT  (RND*e)<3 T
HEN GO TO 400
 430 LET pr=INT  (RND*3)+1
 440 IF pr>1 AND INT  (RND*e)>2 T
HEN GO TO 430
 450 IF pr<3 AND INT  (RND*e)<3 T
HEN GO TO 430
 460 LET ar=INT  (RND*2)+1
 470 IF ar>1 AND INT  (RND*e)>2 T
HEN GO TO 450
 480 IF ar<3 AND INT  (RND*e)<3 T
HEN GO TO 450
 490 LET pr=INT  (pr+pr+ar)/3)
 500 PRINT  Overall     ;k$(3 TO e
rl) PRINT
 510 RETURN
 587 REM
 588 REM  Do review
 589 REM
 600 GO TO 610+pr*20
 630 IF RND*2<1 THEN PRINT h$;"
continue to presents standards of
 herd20 and incompetence second
 to none, having set a precedent
 with the appalling ";e$;"."  GO
TO 700
```

```
 640 PRINT "Judging from this is
ue effortless, that are a no-hope
r outfit who with any luck will
 shortly slide into an unearned
 television.  GO TO 700
 660 IF RND*2<1 THEN PRINT h$;"
hews certainly improved since so
 lessons the Great ";e$;" GO
TO 700
 680 PRINT  Adequately competent
version of the classic ";e$;"."
 GO TO 700
 670 IF RND*2<1 THEN PRINT "Mind
-boggingly brilliant reworking o
f the immortal arcade classic ";
e$.  GO TO 700
 680 PRINT h$; seem dedicated t
o maintaining the incredibly hig
h standard established with thei
r 4000th hit classic ";e$."
 700 GO TO 700+int(rnd*20)
 720 IF RND*3<1 THEN PRINT  Have
 an all my years of experience
as an all-said hack have I seen
 graphics implemented with such f
ull and brilliance."  GO TO 800
 730 PRINT "On the strength of t
he graphics alone, this game is
 on a par with the Mona Lisa, the
 Sistine Chapel, and Rubbrik's P
ubes."  GO TO 800
 740 IF RND*3<1 THEN PRINT  The
graphics are convincing if unspe
ctacular."  GO TO 800
 750 PRINT  Graphics are not the
games strongest point, but they
 are O.K. If you like that kind o
f thing."  GO TO 800
 760 IF RND*3<1 THEN PRINT  The
graphics in this game deserve th
e electric chair simply on the s
trength of the graphics alone.
 GO TO 800
 770 PRINT "Usually this game j
 about as appealing as teenage
acne.  GO TO 800
 800 GO TO 800+pr*20
 820 IF RND*3<1 THEN PRINT "So d
isjointed is the game action, it
 is clear that the authors are s
uffering from severe organic bra
in disease."  GO TO 900
```

IER

Doubtless you have been frequently awe-stricken by the sparkling wit and stiletto-sharp accuracy of our reviewers down here at SIG K. By special permission of our noble and gracious editor I am empowered to inform you that our output is now almost entirely automated.

After all reviewers have lots of better things to do rather than go through vast heaps of luridly illustrated cassettes trying to sift a few jewels from the dross. Just imagine a combination of lumberjack assistant and psychoanalyst. That's the sort of person who would be ideally suited to the task. We so far haven't found anyone to fill the bill so rather than waste vast gum chewing time we rely on SHAFTER! (Simulated Hacking Allowing Fast Throughput of Electronic Reviews)

The masterpiece of software engineering runs on the Spectrum 48K super computer. It is a fully flexible system and output can be made tailored according to the user's wishes. We recently installed version 2 (listed here) which contains the ultimate in user friendly labour saving features. We don't even have to look up all those awesome game titles and software house names any more since the system constructs them for itself.

We're sure that you let out there have never noticed the difference. But just in case you do go and ask for *Toad Cruncher* by Psychoyawn at your local retailer they're more than likely to tell you that it's out of stock rather then admit ignorance. A case of the emperor's new clothes. The object of the exercise is to knock out entertaining and plausible sounding prose and the o what SHAFTER! does really well. Type it in and you'll see that being a reviewer is simplicity itself. You may even want to start your own magazine as a result. Should you do this, please take great care not to muscle in on our patch as we do a very nice line in cement overshoes and our office is very conveniently situated for the river.

```
990 PRINT "Playing this is like
having your brains extracted vi
a your left nostril with a dirty
teaspoon." GO TO 000
040 IF RND<2>1 THEN PRINT "Once
you've beat the rules (translated
from the original German Satan-
ic), the game proves to be pas
sably playable." GO TO 000
050 PRINT "Game playing stenogra
ds are not about to set the world
on fire, but it's quite adequate
to ter a rainy afternoon." GO T
O 000
060 IF RND<0>1 THEN PRINT "The
game action is so involving, so
exquisitely balanced, that one i
s convinced that this game is th
creation of superior minds, po
sibly god-like in their capabili
ties, but certainly representin
g the next step in human evolutio
n." GO TO 000
070 PRINT "Fantastically varied
play scenarios. Although even a
child of three route masier the
game rules the actions remain
atently challenging." GO TO 000
080 GO TO 000+rnd*20
090 IF RND<2>1 THEN PRINT "It s
ales about as addictive as shar
ing a prison cell with a Rottwei
lr and murderer." GO TO 1000
100 PRINT "I would rather be ta
ught selling home-breed beer in
Iran than play this game once a
gain." GO TO 1000
040 IF RND<0>1 THEN PRINT "Plea
sant enough to fill a few idle h
ours, particularly for under-fiv
es." GO TO 1000
050 PRINT "The game does have a
certain odd fascination which t
empts us playing it, although I do
n't know if I'd want to load it
up again." GO TO 1000
060 IF RND<0>1 THEN PRINT "So a
ddictive is this game that I am now
having to attend a special clin
ic and after six months of intens
ive therapy, have cut my playin
g hours down to ten a day." GO
TO 1000
070 PRINT "It is completely imp
ossible to stop playing this gam
e. I'd very much like to, since
I haven't even eaten an ibrem da
ys. Will someone out there send
help...please."
```

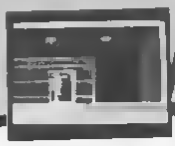
```
1000 GO TO 1000+rnd*20
1020 IF RND<2>1 THEN PRINT "I re
nsider the very existence of t
g as detrimentive proof that the
re is no God." GO TO 1100
1030 PRINT "People who have the
nerve to seven remiscentsle market
ing gross like this should at le
ast be locked away for a ver
y long time." GO TO 1100
1040 IF RND<2>1 THEN PRINT "All
in all, a worthwhile, if unorig
inal effort." GO TO 1100
1050 PRINT "This shows promise,
so let's hope that the gal th
eir act together in future." GO
TO 1100
1060 IF RND<2>1 THEN PRINT "I co
nnot imagine any pleasure remar
ble with even these seconds spe
nt playing ." GO TO 1100
1070 PRINT "It will be nothing s
hort of a national tragedy if ev
eryone in the UK is not speedil
y compelled to play this game
at gun-point if necessary."
1100 PRINT
1110 PRINT "From ,n$
1120 PRINT "Cassie , Cassette
1130 LET cs=INT (RND*200) IF cs
<100 THEN GO TO 1130
1140 LET cs=cs/200
1150 PRINT "Price ,cs
1160 PRINT "Graphics ",x$(1 TO
5)
1170 PRINT "Addictiveness ",x$(
1 TO 5)
1180 PRINT "Playability ",x$(1
TO 5)
1190 RETURN
1997 REM
1998 REM Initialise
1999 REM
2000 DIM s$(30,60) DIM t$(30,20
)
2010 DIM b$(30,60) DIM c$(30,20
)
2020 DIM e$(30,30)
2030 LET x$="KKK"
2040 LET n=0
2050 LET n=n+1 READ x$ IF x$=
"eee" THEN GO TO 2060
2060 LET s$(n)=x$ GO TO 2050
2070 LET n=n-1 LET n=0
2080 LET n=n+1 READ x$ IF x$=
"eee" THEN GO TO 2090
2090 LET t$(n)=x$ GO TO 2080
2100 LET n=n+1 READ x$ IF x$=
"eee" THEN GO TO 2110
2110 LET b$(n)=x$ GO TO 2100
2120 LET n=n-1 LET n=0
2130 LET n=n+1 READ x$ IF x$=
"eee" THEN GO TO 2140
2140 LET c$(n)=x$ GO TO 2130
2150 LET n=n-1 LET n=0
2160 LET n=n+1 READ x$ IF x$=
"eee" THEN GO TO 2170
2170 LET e$(n)=x$ GO TO 2160
2180 LET n=n-1 CLS
2190 PRINT PRINT "Select Sa
rfari Mood
2200 PRINT PRINT "1. Brain da
mage/Celbery
2210 PRINT PRINT "2. It's Pay
day
2220 PRINT PRINT "3. Just bac
k from pub
2230 PRINT PRINT "4. Trashed
up
2240 PRINT PRINT "5. Monday m
orning
2250 PRINT PRINT "6. Hungover
2260 PRINT PRINT "7. Recently
deceased PRINT "SPACE to
reminisce"
2270 LET x$=INKEY$ IF x$="" THE
N GO TO 2270
2280 LET n=VAL x$ IF n=0 OR n>7
THEN GO TO 2270
2290 LET n=n
2296 RETURN
2997 REM
2998 REM Data Statements
2999 REM
3000 DATA "Alien", "Toad", "Blob
", "Galaxy", "Zombie", "Robot"
3010 DATA "Android", "Rieck", "In
vader", "Hoester"
3020 DATA "eeee"
3100 DATA "Attack", "Farm", "Robu
sh", "Hogsnap", "Quest", "Encounter
"
3110 DATA "Patrol", "Adventure",
"Wars", "Buster", "Cruncher"
3150 DATA "eeee"
3200 DATA "Keep", "Mirro", "Psycho
", "Zapper", "Nuff", "Nova"
3210 DATA "Inter", "Shark", "Rippe
r", "Crash", "Ball"
3250 DATA "eeee"
3300 DATA "Soft", "Tronic", "Soft
ware", "Fun", "eeee", "Projects
", "Smash", "Zoom", "Warm", "Desi
"
3350 DATA "eeee"
3400 DATA "Nemesis II", "Jupiter Ac
e", "Nettel Superius"
3410 DATA "ICL 1904E", "Cray II",
"Tandy TRS-80"
3420 DATA "Unexpanded ZX80", "ENI
AC", "Babbage Analytic Engine"
3450 DATA "eeee"
```

The FERRET

Tony Takoushi

IT APPEARS that someone out there shares my observation (from the last issue of Big K) over Uncle Clive hiring the Imagine hierarchy to do *Bandersnatch* on the QL

I hear that Clive received a parcel of Imagine games (including such classics as *Frantic/Pedro 64* and *Schizoid*) with a note saying something along the lines of 'You hired the authors of these games to do your conversion!'



AFTER THE recent announcement by Rocksoft that they had various music copyrights and they were enforcing them against software houses (Masertronic's *Chiller* being a prime example) I wondered who Rocksoft are

Could they be part of The Performing Rights Society? Or The Mechanical Copyright Protection Society — both of whom represent various music interests? No to my suprise I found that the backing force of Rocksoft is none other than the Spectrum Group. It would appear to me that they are buying music copyrights and charging software houses (amongst others?) for use in their games. Why is one of the biggest forces in UK computer distribution taking a fee from many companies they supply to and distribute for?

Let me put it another way. Who says you can't have it both ways!

Thank heaven for little girls? Two girls, to be precise. Heather Lament (ex Rabbit) and Bruce Everiss (ex Imagine) wife have joined forces in a company called Softsource which will distribute software to retailers.

As for Bruce he's now a leading force in Tansoft. He is said to be on a salary of 30k with a Mercedes company car and credit card

THERE'S EAGER and there's eager. But Ocean is a little too keen these days. Ocean were so sure they would get the contract for Airwolf (from the hit TV series) that they had full colour ads designed and printed in the computer press saying they had the licence and the game was available. Now I know for a fact that Elite Software (Steve Wilcox and Co) have definitely got the contract from MCA (the Merchandising Corp of America).

P.S. Stop Press. Elite are suing Ocean along the lines mentioned above!

I relish the prospect of the launch of the Stratos from Onc. It is said to have a special video controller chip with very high resolution and 16 colours. 64K RAM, multi-directional scrolling, 2 ROM sockets and 3½" disc drives.

OCEAN HAVE hired two mega game programmers, John Gibson and Ian Weatherburn from Denton Design to do some freelance work for them — but of more interest, they are said to be producing a game that could be released under the newly acquired Imagine logo

MARK BUTLER will soon be back in the software industry. He will be launching a new company called Rebel City early 1986

ALL YOU budding Spectrum software houses will be happy to hear that a conversion ROM is rumoured to have been released in the US. It will allow bog-standard UK Spectrum games to run on the US Timex 2000. Could this give the Spectrum a new lease of life?

Jack Tramiel, ex-Commodore boss, now heading the revitalised Atari Corp

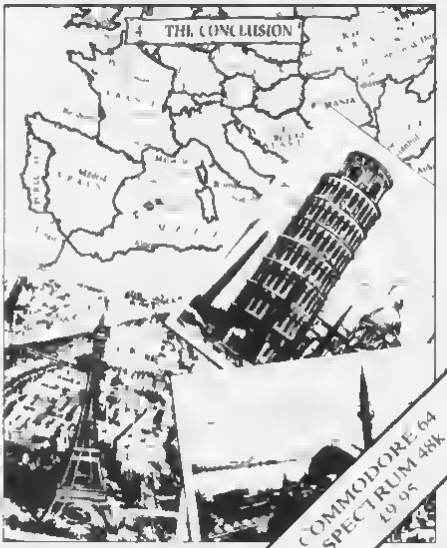
WITH THE arrival of Jack Tramiel at Atari plans are afoot to stop converting arcade titles for the 64. After seeing the official *Galaxians* on the 64 all I can say is THANK GOD! *Galaxians* (not to mention that terrible so called *Defender*) is one of the most disgusting games I have seen this year. It is slow, the graphics and sound lack bite and it plays like a real dodo. Steer well clear of this one. It's a strong contender for Worst Game of the Year

.GOSSIP...GOSSIP...GOSSIP.

SHARDS SOFTWARE PRESENTS

AN EPIC TWO CASSETTE FAMILY ADVENTURE IN FOUR PARTS

THE PETTIGREW CHRONICLES



COMMODORE 64
SPECTRUM 48K
19.95

Selected Stores

AVAILABLE NOW AT ALL GOOD STOCKISTS or MAIL ORDER from SHARDS SOFTWARE [illegible]

Ramalama! It's Mama Llama!

Camal Ya Faithful and knuckle down to a aesaion of JEFF MINTER'S nawest amasharooni—and a continuation of tha Ungulant Saga. TONY TAKOUSHI raports . . .

JEFF MINTER's pilgrimage to Peru last October was the inspiration for his latest game called *Mama Llama*. It features a (surprise!) mother Llama and her two babies all of whom are being attacked, in the best Minter tradition, by aliens.

The game follows the Minter style of a good shoot'em up but uses smooth scrolling backdrops to good effect. The scrolling backdrops are a first in that they are very colourful unlike Tony Crowther who sticks firmly to foul background colours!

The overall aim is to survive and protect the baby llamas, who mimic their mothers every action so as she leaps and spits at the aliens so do they! You have many sectors to patrol, with scanners within each section to help you locate any approaching nasties.

Following on from *Sheep in Space* and *Ancipital* Minter has further evolved his gravity routines to allow incredible permutations on the alien attack patterns and on the movement of the llama. If you manage to clear a sector a warp gate will open to another sector but you can choose to stay where you are a little longer.

Other sectors include the Inca City, Egyptian City, Space City, Rock City and Inca [illegible] the gravity and [illegible] of the aliens being [illegible] for each.

One of the most outstanding features of Minter games is his incredible ability to make the game feel good to play. When you pick up the joystick it feels true. Real gamers will know what I mean (the rest of you will just have to work at it).

At the time of review the game was only half complete and had to be reviewed as such due to print deadlines but even semi complete its quality stood out and I look forward to seeing the finished item.

Rescue From Fractalus could be the finest 3D game in existence—that is said hand on heart. *Behind Jaggi Lines* (as it is otherwise called) was written by an Atari/Lucasfilm team who based it on the film *Return of the Jedi*.

MOTHER

You are placed in a cockpit looking out of your mothership preparing for launch. Press the fire button and the screen explodes into a crescendo of colour (honest!) as you zoom out through a launch tunnel and descend to the planet on a rescue mission for standard pilots.

As you fly around the planet your instruments show where the stranded pilots are and you have to get within three lengths of them before you cut out your engines to land and rescue them. After you land you must switch off your boosters and wait for the pilot to run toward your ship from his wrecked craft.

As he nears you open the airlock to beautiful soft hiss of air that and wait for him to bang on the hull of your ship as he clambers in. You then fire the boosters pull the ship's nose up and fly around to rescue the other pilots.

Life is not exactly easy as there are enemy posts positioned around the mountain tops firing on you — and the pilots you try to rescue *could* be aliens who trundle up to your ship and smash your viewing screen.

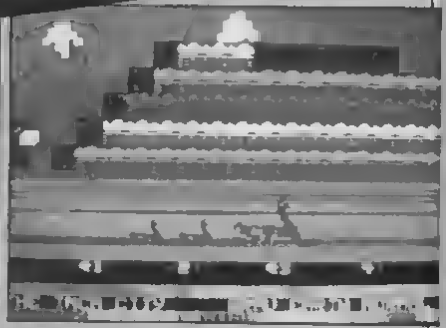
I cannot really begin to do this game justice in a written review as it has to be experienced to be believed. The way your craft swoops into valleys and climbs up the sides of mountains and drops down over them gives an incredible feeling of exhilaration. There is a game called *Encounter* on the market from Novagen (a *Battlezone* clone) that offers very fast 3D graphics but this Atari game humbles it.

MASQUERADE

Rescue from Fractalus has 99 levels to choose from with anything from three to 33 pilots to rescue, accurate and fast enemy laser posts and ever increasing aliens masquerading as pilots.

It is officially available in the US now and Atari plan to release it in the UK, although no firm date is available at present.

I can think of no better reason to go out and buy an Atari than to play this game, and I promise you won't be disappointed.



Howling Through The Rooms

Gun loaded with silver bullets firmly to hand, PIN FAHEY stalks the chambers of Ultimate's latest mega-epic KNIGHT LORE with the Sabreman. He finds a game that won't be cracked easily ... or so he thinks...

There's no rest for Sabreman. Having emerged triumphant from his encounter with the fabled *Sabre Wolf* he must now conquer the animal side of his own nature for he has now become a werewolf. The only person who can help is the renowned wizard Melkhior who unfortunately is a tetchy old geezer. To ensure that he isn't disturbed by idle callers the wizened savant has surrounded himself with deadly traps and barriers of all sorts. Me I'd just take the phone off the hook but you know how wizards are.

So in time-honoured arcade-adventure style you have to get thrug them collecting all the components of a potion which will free you soul from the dread curse of lycanthropy.

What makes *Knight Lore* such a joy to play though is the sheer style of the animation and room graphics. Ultimate eschew the use of screens full of bright clashing primary colours to concentrate on the details and in doing so demonstrate that games can be highly playable and tasteful simultaneously.

The rooms of Melkhior's castle are displayed in three-D from a oblique viewpoint which makes a change from the usual cross-section or plan layout. The objects also have a solid sort of feel. If there's a pile of blocks in the room you can walk out of sight behind it for example. It's very reminiscent of Quicksilva's Sefscold games. Unlike the latter however *Knight Lore* is beautifully animated. Even when

ordered to do anything he's still on the move pacing around the room in a bemused fashion or when in his wolf form occasionally snarling quietly to himself.

A little moving indicator at the bottom of the screen shows you the position of the sun and moon and when the moon rises Sabreman goes through his metamorphosis into an animal. This can be very disconcerting if you're just in the middle of negotiating an obstacle. The wolf form seems to be able to jump slightly further than the man which can come in useful.

The traps are of many forms from patrolling dwarf guards to simple problems of jumping from ledge to ledge. You may have to move the furniture around to get to objects you want. I don't think that we're going to get a rash of maps for *Knight Lore* because the castle plan is different every time you play although the relationship of rooms in a given section remains mostly the same. Even if you're a naff player like me there'll be rooms you can solve so it's a game everyone can get into quickly.

The only question is what happens next? The *Sabre Wolf* saga is starting to resemble the Grail legend. We can speculate tht the unseen wizard Melkhior stands for the powerful moral force of Reason a force which can drive out the dark side of humanity only after a ritual purification full of hazards. Suitably purged of evil, will Sabreman now set out to save th[illegible]

BIG K FUNNIES

TONY BENYON

LET'S GET CRITICAL .

THE BIG K Reviews!

COMPUTER GAMES
VIDEO GAMES & UTILITIES

How we rate them–

K K K = Magnificol
K K = Good-o
K = So-So
None = No-No

Reviewers–
Steve Keaton
Kim Aldis
John Conquest
Pin Fahey
Richard Burton
Gary Liddon
Sean Cox
Duncan Gamble

PINBALL WIZARD Spectrum K K

Sure PLAYS A MEAN SOFTWARE

Surprisingly successful attempt to simulate the not inconsiderable joys of the common pin table. Although it looks fairly mundane the gameplay is actually quite addictive and evokes the authentic fish n chips feel of a run down pin joint. The author was obviously a devotee.

Potential gamers are advised to note that the pin-table is of the double gate variety with high and low scoring bumpers bonus holes and a free ball pay-off. A familiar layout. Balls are relatively fast paced with almost flicker free movement and the flipper responses are excellent. I dare say that with practice you could aim for almost any bumper on screen. The potential for mega-scores is clearly massive.

I doubt it will ever replace the real thing though. Half the fun of playing the genuine article involved thwacking the pin-cabinet at some strategic point. Who could play and not taunt the tilt? Unfortunately to succumb to such temptation here would clearly have disastrous results! —S K

From SAGITTARIAN SOFTWARE
Other versions: CBM 64
Format cassette
Price £5.95
Graphics: K
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KK

COUNTRY COTTAGES Spectrum 48K K K

STICKS TRICKS

One [illegible] building [illegible] two players [illegible] try [illegible] cottage racing towards [illegible] set total assets figure [illegible] which is used to determine [illegible] length of the game.

There are no battle [illegible] unnecessarily difficulty levels which increase the hazards [illegible] like sheets, moonlighting [illegible] damage burglaries and all the things that make the game [illegible] should be interesting.

You start with nothing [illegible] interest bank loan [illegible] further [illegible] borrowing system thereafter [illegible] capping system [illegible] totally endless [illegible] property [illegible] and [illegible] you can own [illegible] bank [illegible] you spend the power [illegible] have a cottage you [illegible] tenants [illegible] high and you get no response. Similarly you can terrorise tenants but you risk losing the tenants. Mostly single key operated the game runs very smoothly and the bookkeeping is very slick. But my would wholly by night for the tenants are Constantly moving out and breaking up place up! It's not all gravy the landlord racket. A bad [illegible] that you have very few options but fun and [illegible]

JC

From: STERLING
Format: cassette
Price £5.95
Graphics KK
Playability KKK
Addictiveness: KK

REVIE

A game in the same mould as Football Manager. The object of the game is to reach the top managerial rating. This can only be achieved by winning the team championship league at the hardest level.

You can select the number of races in a season but the more you have the more careful you have to be with your money. The income comes from your sponsors and if they think you are being greedy they will reduce the amount requested. It depends on your success in the last race as to whether you get what you want.

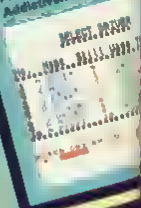
When selecting a driver you are presented with a list of well known drivers whom you employ at a set transfer fee. The same applies to the mechanics.

After each race you can see your overall performance and then have the option of buying a new car, this affects your performance rating.

If you enjoyed Football Manager this is definitely [illegible] on [illegible] SC

GRAND PRIX MANAGER Spectrum 48K K K

From SILICON JOY
Format cassette
Price £6.95
Graphics K
Playability KK
Addictiveness KK



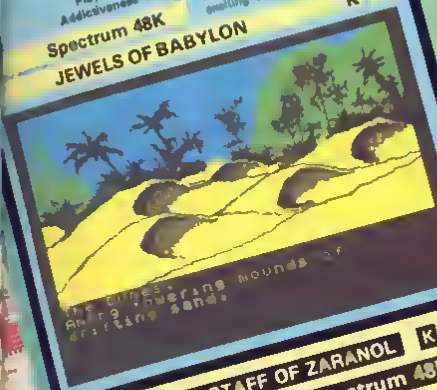
GEM

Sole survivor of a pirate attack on a ship carrying the fabled Jewels of Babylon you have found the pirates island base and set out to recover the hot ice in standard Interceptor style. It's a maze text adventure 100+ locations with periodic and brilliant graphics rather unnecessary though. Far superior to these of the earlier *Forest At World's End* very sophisticated command analyser makes it possible and necessary to enter complex actions. Getting off your ship for example is done by climbing down a ladder. There are three mazes: jungle swamp and thicket very easy on with not much in the way of loose objects to use. Trapping them. Beyond them further hazards such as lightning cannibals before you get to the main course. Fraught and exciting. **JC.**

From INTERCEPTOR
Format: cassette
Price: £5.50
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KK

Spectrum 48K — K K

JEWELS OF BABYLON



MOON ALERT — Spectrum 48K — K K K

MOONIES

Partly implemented from of that which under fact as adventure de Moon *Patrol* the hairy de outside of Dis cyw Space Mountain.

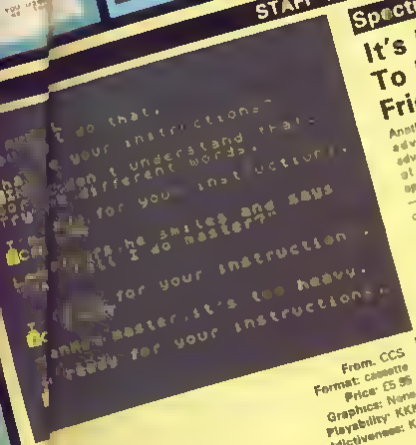
Starfighter 7 has been invaded by alien rascals having survived the closing well them s the breaks. Ministry and reach the sainty Moon Base Alpha in your trusty Medal T Moon Rover. However not only must you navigate some ludicrously tricky marked terrain en route but you must also slug it out with these pesky aliens who not content with wasting your starship wanna waste you too! Although intrinsically simple in concept the combination of challenge of tracks canyons and impressible attackers works on practically every level. High scores demand both strategic flying and defensive shooting! However it must be said that the rather dull visual FX are rather dull. When I bust a buggy I want to see it burst. At least a couple of wheels should come bouncing out of the debris.

Dragon Data is engaged that a great [illegible] Fun!

The Star [illegible] important [illegible] Microspect [illegible] rather un [illegible] made notable that [illegible] deeper with the prog [illegible] held grossed to do mon [illegible] count you in and on! S [illegible] nitpicking Playwise th [illegible] stuff and it was you'd book [illegible] tunar lesson right away. **S K**

From OCEAN SOFTWARE
Format: cassette
Price: £5.90
Graphics: KK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KK

STAFF OF ZARANOL — K K



Spectrum 48K

It's Nice To Heve Friends

Another of CCS's excellent text adventures with all the advantages and disadvantages of Quilt Sensation. As apprentice to the mighty Zaranol — who's off at a sorcerers convention — you find yourself in dire magical straits cursed by a demon and must round up five items to get out from under. There are only 45 locations but the puzzles, if not the most difficult around are well conceived and fairly unusual. One radical departure is that the two different Help functions (one summons a friend the other is a straightforward appeal) both work quite often. Just as bad yourself isn't too hot to the high level magic that's going down. Crisp clear and fun. **JC.**

From: CCS
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: None
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KK

ASTRONUT — K K K

Spectrum 48K

The object of *Astronut* is to push three blocks onto matter transporters at the bottom of the screen but there are many things to stop you. Unlike Software Projects other games you don't have the option to jump you rely completely on two little erupting volcanoes which will throw you up to the first bridge or ledge you reach.

You can drop bombs which will kill the enemies but there is a time delay before they explode making it difficult to time the destruction.

Astronut contains 15 screens every one better than the next. If you can't clear a sheet you have the option to go directly to any other after the game.

Graphically it is excellent but unfortunately the instructions don't tell you which keys to use. This is one game I will add to my collection. **S C.**

From SOFTWARE PROJECTS
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK
Playability: KK

How to teach your Micro a thing or two

Thousands of home computer owners have yet to discover their microcomputer's potential to help with many of the problems and decisions that come up every day in the home or office

Perhaps you have always promised yourself that you would teach yourself programming, but have been put off by manuals which seem to assume a lifetime spent studying computer science and mathematics Maybe you have looked at other computer books, but have yet to find one which is free of unnecessary jargon or where the program examples bear some relevance to real life and not space invaders

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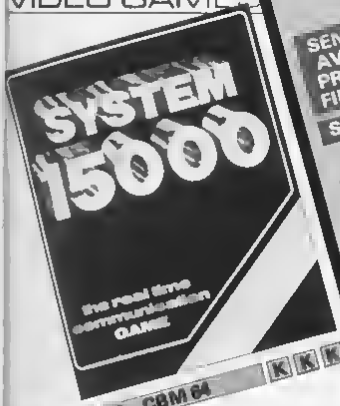


SYSTEM 15000 CBM 64 K K K

Heavily publicised over the last few years is the growing phenomenon of the Hacker, the dedicated key plonker who through a vicious sense of humour or sheer bloody mindedness, has been dreaming up new and interesting things to do with larry lands of Coca Cola bank accounts and Big Ron's favourite nuclear warhead

More recently, in this country, we have seen the readjustment of the pound to a sensible albeit incorrect, level and the heading headlines into the Royal love-letters in the private parts of Prestel Overall, considering the popularity of these activities, I find it surprising that a game of this nature has not been seen before

System 15000 is a telephone communications simulation with a built in plot to keep the interest and adrenalin on the move A friend has been ripped off to the tune of 1 6 million by a company called Rasico Another friend Mike has been investigating but Rasico has heavy Mafia connections and the man with the villain cass and zoot suit is looking to examine the inside of his head with a meat cleaver Knowing a good friend and complete idiot when he sees one he dumps the whole list in your lap, grabs a number nine yak and heads for the safety of the Tibetan monastic community On your head now lies the responsibility of finding the bucks and putting them back in the right place

Information is minimal A telephone number, entry codes and occasional hints from an interested party are all you get and using this you have to find and gain access to the relevant systems Doing this within a week is unlikely I spent two days discovering that it is hard and lots of fun but little else — certainly the only computer simulation I've played that bears any resemblance to the real thing

Dialling is done from the keyboard, to the sound of dialling or engaged tones, and the System 15000 software automatically detects incoming messages If the telephone company notices something and starts poking around, lines are automatically cut.

A nice game — even if it does take hours to load — safer than the real thing, lighter on the pocket and if planting Pershings in the Kremlin is your style, very good practice for the real thing — K A

From AVS Price £12 95 Playability KKK
Format cassette Graphics K Addictiveness KKK

SENTINEL AVENGER PROTEUS FIREFLASH K

Spectrum 48K

Software is being packaged more and more like lager This one's a cut-price four pack from Abacus and works out at about half normal Spectrum price Furthermore two of the cassettes have an extra bonus game on the other side So clearly the problem isn't the quantity offered here but what about the quality? I have to say that unfortunately these aren't the most stunning arcade games in the universe

Sentinel is a sort of *Asteroids* variant, your ship can be rotated left and right or thrust applied You must avoid obstacles such as your own space station or the asteroids and aliens The object is to stop the aliens before they take out the space station

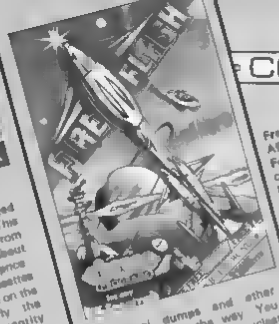
Fireflash is a sort of *Missile Command* scenario but rather fiddly and overcomplicated You have to fire defence missiles to stop the alien invaders reaching your planetary surface

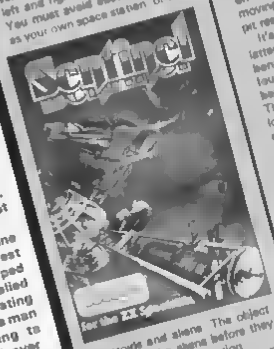
Proteus is a real timeStar Trek You move from quadrant to quadrant of the galaxy clearing the taste of alien craft to allow your lettuce fleet to pass I thought this much the best of the four — it gives the player plenty to do

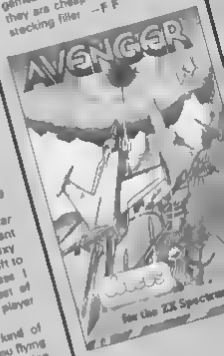
Finally *Avenger* is a kind of sub-scramble and has you flying over an alien landscape taking out fuel dumps and other installations on the way You have to watch out for nuclear reactors though in case you go up in a rather spectacular mushroom cloud On the reverse of *Fireflash* is *Destroyer* a rather simple-minded naval game and *Proteus* has *Android Pit Rescue* on its flipside which has you moving from level of a collapsed pit rescuing trapped miners

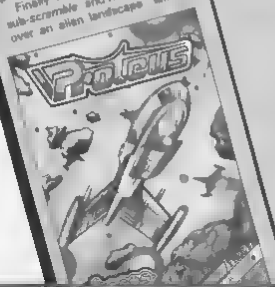
It's unfair to criticise these latter two as they are a free bonus however I thought the four main programs could have been better even at this price The graphics are rather tacky looking and although the game design differs in many ways from the arcade originals the changes to my mind detract from the playability rather than increase it I'm carping a bit though After all these are games they are playable and they are cheap Possibly a good stocking filler — F F

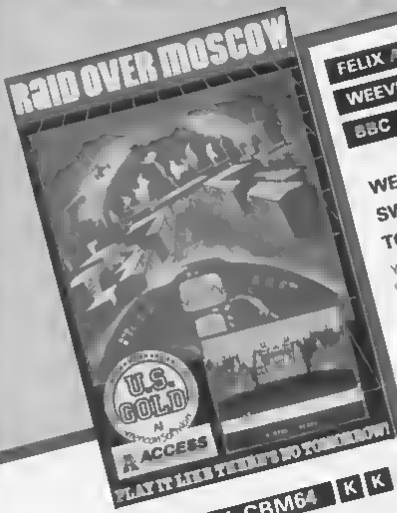
From ABACUS SOFTWARE
Format: cassette
Price £14 95 (set of four)
Graphics K
Playability K
Addictiveness KK











RAID OVER MOSCOW CBM64 K K

RAID OVER NEASDEN

How ironic I sit down to write my review of *Raid Over Moscow* and John Lennon comes on the radio singing 'Give Peace a Chance Some hope Johnny baby, Ronnie Reagan is back in the White House and the Yankee Doodle Dandies are getting up for war in space Forgive the moralising but what else can you say about this game the first piece of Propagandaware Remember, with modern military technology, there is very little difference between vapourising Russians on a home computer screen and vapourising them on a missile silo screen somewhere deep under Utah

If *Raid Over Moscow* was a naff game, then it wouldn't matter The trouble is that the game is OK Not brilliant just fairly good The graphics are great, and the sounds superb, though the game is in the final analysis disappointing It resembles the earlier smash hit game Beach-head though it is much more sophisticated The game opens with a space-shuttle's-eye view of the world and you have to scramble space planes To do this you must manoeuvre them in zero-gravity t found the joystick controls are not easy to use It then goes onto a Zaxxon like screen followed by a screen resembling the last one in Beach head and on and on through seven screens

Like any good game you get better at *Raid Over Moscow* the longer you play but it is a real bore going back to the start with each new game t didn t find it very addictive because of this Though it is fund for the first few minutes I found that I quickly lost interest I'm sure it will be popular with little boys of all ages especially those who work on the Pentagon But ultimately *Raid Over Moscow* is insubstantial Candy Floss software — **B S**

From ACCESS/US GOLD
Format cassette
Price £7 95
Graphics KKK
Playability KK
Addictiveness K

FELIX AND THE EVIL WEEVILS BBC K

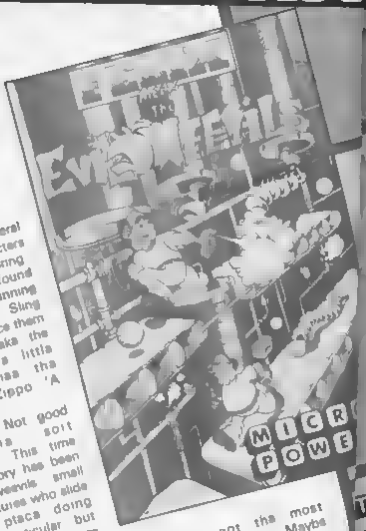
WEEVIL SWING TOGETHER

Yet another of the several computer game characters who is starting to get boring In the last epic Felix found himself in a factory running up and down ladders Sling the ladders out replace them with tubes and make the conveyors look a little diffarant likewise the baddies and Zippo 'A brand new game

It a not bad Not good aithat mois soit of indifferent This time round the factory has been overrun by weevils small wormlike creatures who slide about the place doing nothing in particular but junking Felixes Felix in turn junks weevils by grabbing aerosol cans that appear at random intervals about the screen and spraying them One can wastes one weevil tt goes without saying that the touch of a weevil is death as is the touch of the ball bearings that travel along the belts and down the tubes

Not the most exciting games from Program Power s vast library and certainly not the most interesting character Maybe a mota intaraating occupation gambling or serious drinking might perk the lad up — **K A**

From MICRO POWER
Format cassette
Price £6 95
Graphics K
Playability K
Addictiveness K



MICRO OLYMPICS — K

BBC

KNEES BEND, GIRLS

This amazing piece which supposedly stretches the limits of the BBC to new boundaries turns out to be a prehistoric version of *Decathlon*, with the unfortunate athlete reduced to a spindly creature with knock knees and a weird ability to run in slow motion. The eleven track events showed about with such grace turn out to be variations on running, chasing-anything, jumping, a short distance to an insane-distance throwing a plate, a stick or a sack with a lump on it and finally jumping up along or up with the help of another stick.

A friend and I used to get a great deal of fun from the original. Two complete morons containing an outrageous level of alcohol, pounding the hell out of a video game machine at four in the morning is not something to be missed but the fails to generate any interest whatsoever. The graphics are slow and not very convincing, the loading system from tape is lunacy, ploughing through several programs before finding the selected event. Worst of all are the keyboard controls. The original, one key controls each leg, each pressed alternately to make the man run. Getting anywhere at all means hammering at the keyboard like a berserk pianiste, the net result being a mangled pile of plastic and a very wealthy repairman before half an hour has passed. It might also be useful to put the instructions on paper instead of in a separate program where you can't see them when they're really needed. — K.A.

From: MICRO USER
Format: cassette/disc
price: £6.95 cassette £7.95 disc
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: Non

INTERVIEW CBM 64 — K K K

PIZZA JOB, WACK

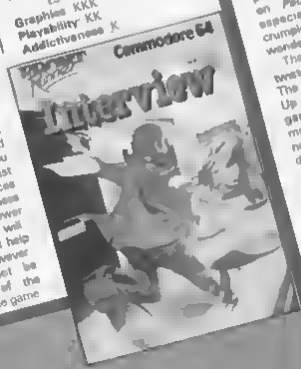
Getting a job can be a right old pain. This right old game is all about getting to an interview on time and intact. It all starts when you are sitting in your living room. A message comes through the letter box telling you to get down to the Front Runner office in 15 minutes for an interview for a job as a programmer. Then the action starts.

Front Runner doesn't appear to be a very experienced software house. It expects potential programmers to turn up on time and smartly dressed. Anyone who has met a real programmer knows that they make the Young Ones seem smart and sophisticated. Jeff Minter didn't get where he is today by wearing a blue suit. Still try turning up at the Front Runner office looking like anything other than a showroom dummy and you can say goodbye to the job.

The game has two stages. The first involves a dash down the street to the bank. As you make your way there sta open manholes for you to fall into and dirty (The local council must have been cutting services again.) If the municipal madness doesn't get you falling fewer pots and foaming dogs will. Moving the joystick should help you avoid the worst however certain situations cannot be sidestepped. In fight of the conservative nature of the game I'm not surprised to see the banana skins lying in wait for you.

Once you reach the bank you move onto another section of the game. Here you must make your way around the same town only this time it is shown in an aerial view. You still use the joystick and there are still hazards to negotiate. You can go to the cleaners to clean your suit to the shoemakers to repair shoes and to the tailors to mend the holes in your clothes. Personally Front Runner can stuff the job, I have worn suits. As for the game it's graphically brilliant but it becomes boring rather quickly. B.B.

From: FRONT RUNNER
Format: cassette disc
Price: £7.95 (cassette) £9.95 (disc)
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: K



GALAXIA Amstrad — K K K

VIOLENCE

Nice one this. Instead of battling past the vicious Vierga from the planet Zug as you can deck with the Starship Saccharine you have to splatter sausages and better budgies (no letters and budgeaphiles please) and then deck with the Starship Saccharine. Not very original but since I got my CPC64 — pure violence. None of these namby pamby cute games for me (I spit on Pacman). Killing is fun especially when the kittes crumples up to the sound of wonderfully violent white noise.

The game resembles *Arcadia* twaxed through ninety degrees. The controls are nice and simple. Up Down Thrust and Fire. A game to play on Monday mornings. No concentration needed. Just sit down and destroy.

Now back to the sausages and budgies. The budgies drop normal budgie type things on you. Obscene but expected. The sausages are realistic and look real food appeal as its cast of baddies also includes a violent herd of mushrooms (is it a herd? Maybe a flock). Anyway giving them a deadly dose of death ray is fun and it's all very addictive. This is the sort of thing that scares Archbishops into writing to *The Times* [illegible] how the computer lack is all violence and should be stamped out before it goes too far. Still it all oozes the touch of a professional with pretty title screen and comprehensive instructions.

One mean though (and there usually is one) Galaxia is totally devoid of a joystick option. Pretty silly if the machine comes complete with a joystick port. It wouldn't really bother me that much of the author's idea of comfortable keys didn't verge on masochism.

If synthetic violence does happen to be on you list of ten favourite pastimes I think Galaxia could be a sensible buy for you. It was certainly a sensible blag for me. — G.L.

From: KUMA
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KKK

BRUCE LEE

CBM 64 **K K K**

A KICKER

Because of a production glitch BIG K's original review of the Atari version of this excellent Kung Fu action game disappeared from the pages but now the Commodore version's out it's time to draw attention to this real goodie.

As Bruce you have to penetrate the fortress of the evil wizard to claim his fortune and Datasoft don't stint on it — infinite wealth and the secret of immortality no less. You can chop and kick the targets being the Green Yamos who also kick just as good as Bruce and ninjas brandishing bokken sticks the former needing three hits to put them down the latter two. Natch that's not the end of your problems there are hazards and traps all the way before you get to the goodies.

There are twenty screens to get through and of course once through them you start all over again at a harder level. You can play Bruce against the computer or two handed with one player controlling the Green Yamo or both alternating as Bruce or trading places.

The two versions are very similar, but the Commodore concedes a lot points to the Atari in details. The Atari graphics are much better, the action is smoother and the animation far superior. But this is to compare good with very good — the 64 version is still well worth having. —J C

From DATASOFT/US GOLD
Other versions Atari
Format cassette
Price £9.95/£14.95 disc
Graphics KKK
Playability KKK
Addictiveness KKK

THRUSTA

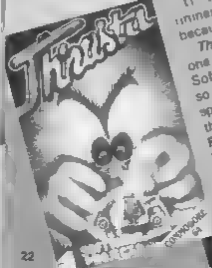
CBM 64

The instructions say that you're proud of your spaceship Thrusta 1 and that together you make a good team. Well I wasn't and we didn't.

Using joystick or keyboard you move a little white ship around the screen shooting alien guards who patrol around the hatching eggs at the bottom of the screen. There are two types of aliens. One of them you shoot the other is killed nudging boulders on top of it. This process can be very slow and quite boring (the sound effects don't exactly help). Once this is done you continue to the next level — pushing boulders on the aliens and shooting the guards (yep the same thing). If this sounds very uninspiring to you that's because it is.

Thrusta has come to be one of the worst games Software Projects have done so far. I would advise you to spend your money on one of their better titles. —S C

From SOFTWARE PROJECTS
Format cassette
Price £5.95
Graphics K
Playability K
Addictiveness None



MILLIONAIRE

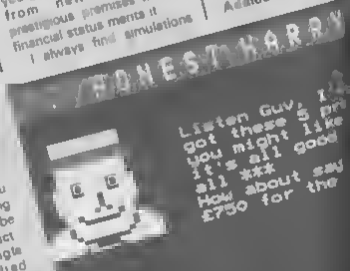
BBC/Electron

If making money is as easy as this pass a piece of the action this way. Ten minutes at the keyboard resulted in the acquisition of new premises enough usable currency to finance more than a few nights of severe drunken [illegible] and an acute sense of [illegible]. *Millionaire* is based heavily on the notion that computer games are an easy way to a fast buck — once upon a time a popular idea but in the light of recent events now treated with more caution. It's a simulation involving you as a programmer and the big wide world which might be interested in your product. Starting with a single program five hundred pounds and grotty premises (Yes, yes, get to the point — Ed.) you are given the opportunity to make a million. The program is locked in a loop which repeatedly displays your assets followed by a progress chart, news and then a list of work options programming selling to retailers or approaching Honest Harry, a character of doubtful origin.

Following this comes a list of promotional ideas to try — and then a few questions about how much you want to spend on advertising and tape duplicating.

Having sorted this lot out you go back and start again from new and more prestigious premises if your financial status merits it. I always find simulations uninspiring to say the least, this one particularly so. A repetitive and predictable game that generally gives a feeling of not giving much return for cash laid out. —K A

From INCENTIVE
Format cassette
Price £6.50
Graphics K
Playability K
Addictiveness none



CYCLONE Spectrum 48K

K K K

A REAL BLAST

What's with this helicopter craze? The damn things are whop-whupping all over the place. Blue Thunders, Airwolves, Whirlybirds (oops that was a while back) whatever if it's get rotor blades and flies it's a star. So, Cyclone is a helicopter game — not the first and not the last, but certainly one of the best.

The scenario is a small group of islands somewhere in an unnamed ocean. You have control of a lone chopper for three if you count the number of lives you have) which you take island-hopping in search of five crates of medical supplies. However wandering about the area is a nasty cyclone. As it nears your position the wind strength increases and the helicopter becomes downright difficult to control. As if that wasn't enough rogue aircraft hurtle in from nowhere on kamikaze missions to take you out if you happen to be in the way. We're talking mid air collisions here friends.

Assuming you can live with all these various threats to life and limb you take off on your mission, flying off from your base on the Base Island. A shadow on the ground gives a good indication of your height. Calling up the map screen you choose a heading and take off into the wild blue yonder keeping a close watch on your wind force indicator (or map screen) for the advancing cyclone. Locating an island you check it out closely for the all-important crate. If it's there you go into a hover and descend the grappling hook deploying automatically at a certain height and winching up the prize.

Oh yes you may see some tiny figures desperately waving at you. These are survivors. Rescue them for bonus points — but only if you have time. These five crates of course take absolute priority over a few natives stupid enough to get themselves caught in a cyclone.

Fuel and time are both limited and there will be the need for touching down to re-fuel at frequent intervals. Landing the chopper is not easy and needs a very delicate touch.

Collect all five crates and return to Base Island for a new mission.

In *Cyclone* Vortex have employed the same smooth-scrolling 3D-effect landscaping first seen in *Andrad 2* and developed in *T.L.L.* The small but highly detailed shape of the chopper flies convincingly over green hilly islands and wave flecked sea. It responds well to the controls, turning in a lifelike manner.

On-screen displays monitor altitude, speed, fuel time, direction and wind force. A useful additional feature is the ability to change your viewpoint by 180°. There's also a warning of approaching aircraft.

Altogether a neat game that scores especially high on both addictiveness and playability. A little too similar to *T.L.L.* in appearance, maybe, but unique enough for that not to worry me. — R B

From VORTEX SOFTWARE
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK

BOULDER DASH

Spectrum 48K

K K K

A CRUSHER

[illegible]ex friend of mine has a [illegible]mmodore 64 and the only [illegible] I miss about not being [illegible] friend is that I can't play *Boulder Dash* no more. Well [illegible]'s all changed. No ex [illegible] hasn't become friend [illegible]gain but *Boulder Dash* has become a Spectrum game. My initial reaction was pure joy but then I thought of what the 64 could do and [illegible]t on what the Spectrum [illegible]couldn't do. I'm surprised I [illegible]even bothered to load it in. You see *Boulder Dash* heavily relies on quick scrolling lots of pretty colours and neato music, all of which the Spectrum isn't really known for. Well the game loaded [illegible] it was *all* there. Boy was I shocked.

A few of you out there may be confused. You may not have heard of *Boulder Dash*. In that case you've probably lived in a shoebox the last six months. Still for all you [illegible]. Here's a scenario description. Rockford has to run about various caves to collect jewels so he can move on to the next cave. It's not really as simple as that since there are boulders all over the place which Rockford can obliterate. It's all very difficult to explain [illegible] easier to play. Having [illegible] possible levels is rare on any game but since what you have to accomplish on each screen is so varied the only way you'll be able to appreciate it is to play it.

What makes *Boulder Dash* such a hit for me is that it's so addictive. In all honesty I can say this is the best game to date for the Spectrum. Which isn't bad going since a week ago I would've said wasn't really Spectrum fodder.

Boulder Dash is a definite must if you use a Spectrum so I'm afraid it's fork out the money time again folks. — G.L.

From FRONT RUNNER
Format cassette
Price £7.95
Graphics KKK
Playability KKK
Addictiveness KKK

UNDERWURLDE

Spectrum 48K

K K K

The new Ultimate release. The very thought sends shivers down any sane reviewer's spine. He knows that in the short time he is given to test this game there is no possible way he can explore its every nuance of gameplay. He also knows that by the time he review sees whizz brats will have cracked the game and sent in highly detailed maps of the whole play area, complete with strategies which the soul less Editor (may bats [illegible]) will wave in the face of him and demand to know why he didn't do better. It's just not worth it. I tell you.

All I'm going to say is that *Underwurlde* is a fabulous new game from Ultimate with wonderfu graphics and lots and lots of incredible features. Don't miss it. So there. **(That's not enough worm. Mere ... or the GCE Revision Packe await Rev Ed)**

Sigh. Oh well. *Underwurlde* is very good. It features actually. It features Sabre man of *Sabre Wulf* fame this time on satan through the Stygian depths where lurk all manner of demonic dangers. And like *Sabre Wulf* it owes much to *Atic Atac* for its style of gameplay. Yep, it's another graphic / arcade / strategy / adventure game.

Once more Sabreman is travelling through a vast interconnecting system of screens (over 80 are claimed) containing rooms, chambers, pits, walls, rocks, ledges and what have you. Every step of his journey is dogged by hordes of winged harpies and what look like flying jellyfish which swoop down hassling out hard-o progress and generally using him as a human pinball. They can be destroyed but weapons have to be found along with energy giving gems. You rapidly grow to hate and curse the flying fiends. Frustration level on *Underwurlde* is exceedingly high. Remember, the Spectrum keyboard was not built to take heavy punishment.

Also along the way the Sabreman will meet numerous guardians: ride manic bubbles, swing from vines, avoid poisonous plants, falling rocks and stalactites and encounter mysterious chasms of drawers.

As is by now traditional with Ultimate's epic arcade adventures, the player is left to discover the majority of the game's features for himself. The barest of hints are given in instructions after which you're on your own. After your allotted lives are used up a percentage indicator for informs you of how much of the game you penetrated. You grow to hate this as well.

At the end of the Sabreman's sojourn according to the cryptic text lies the Ultimate palace of darkness wherein lurks Old Tim. Nick himself and the only way of escape. I can sorry, believe it. I'll never see it — but I can believe it.

Graphics, sound, colour are all up to Ultimate's very high standards, making his game good value for money. Animation is excellent, especially Sabreman's leaps and tumbles.

In the midst of all this general euphoria let me strike a chord of caution. Brilliant as Ultimate are at turning out top quality software they are in danger of becoming some thing of a one note company. *Sabre Wulf*, *Underwurlde* and to a certain degree *Knightlore* are all cut from the same cloth as the highly successful *Atic Atac*. Naturally a company should build on success but not to the extent of ignoring other popular gaming themes. I hope Ultimate's limited outlook will soon be broadened.

Now I return to *Underwurlde* in a vain attempt to unlock more of its secrets. If any kind soul (I really didn't mean what I said about whizz brats) would like to help this humble reviewer escape his personal hell send in your tips, your maps, your hints, your cash. Anon. **(Enough vermin. Another new Ultimate game arrived! RB Aaargghh!!! RB)**

From: ULTIMATE
Format: cassette
Price: £9.95
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KKK

RDLAND AHDY Amstrad

K K

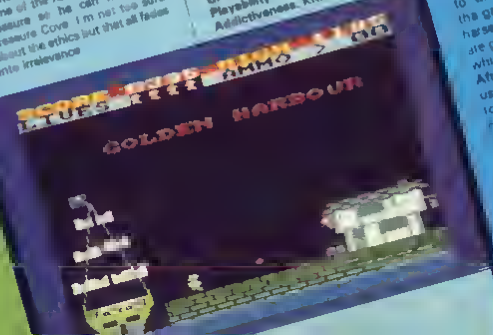
Roland's back and this scenario is an original one. Original? Yes, dear punter.

Roland spins of a thousand firsts. (I mean this guy looks drastically different in every prog. He features in) has taken to the high seas and is generally trying to rob everyone blind. Lloyds of Shipping would not approve. He is in fact walking on the wild side and has become a pirate. Klepto Roland first visits Powder Quay to steal cannonballs to blow up some of the harbour to steal the treasure so he can hide it in Treasure Cove. I'm not too sure about the ethics but that all fades into irrelevance.

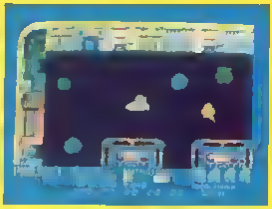
I really do like the game and I would even buy it! So remember, Amsoft, there's gold in them thar punters and you're more likely to get it if you keep producing quality gear like this.

P.S. If anyone is interested where the Roland handle came from (some on-line must be someone vaguely interested) the chief designer of the whole Amstrad project is called Roland Perry. That amazed you, didn't it? — G.L.

From: AMSOFT
Format: cassette
Price: £8.95
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK



PROJECT FUTURE



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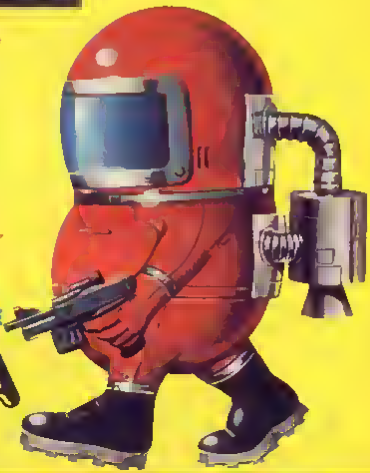

THE **ULTIMATE** ARCADE ADVENTURE

MICROMANIA

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MICROMANIA, 14 LOWER HILL RD EPSOM SURREY KT18 8LT

MR. EE BBC K K K

BY 'ECK, IT WERE GREAT

Mr Ee celebrated Yorkshire magician and tripe grower by eck takes to the underworld, collects cherries and flattens nasty chomping creatures. And if he finds some coal down there could he bring back a lump or two for lan, see Maggie's getting cold.

Around this time last year I was busy sinking thousands into an arcade game called *Mr Do*. I was in a bad way nothing could drag me away from this thing ... closing time, total inebriation or a sharp clout across the back of the head with a blunt instrument. Now Micro Power have brought it to the home market and the same thing applies except that the blunt instrument usually has a message attached to it to the effect that dinner's ready or it's time to go to work.

Totally faithful to the original. It's yet another tunnelling game but with a humour and originality that sets it apart from the rest. *Mr Ee* is a wizard-type character who finds himself burrowing through the earth chased by Umphs — teeth with feet — and collecting cherries. Two methods of protection lie at the disposal of this character: pancaking Umphs with the many apples that lie buried underground or hurling his crystal ball at them. It bounces around the maze created by *Mr Ee's* tunnelling like a tennis ball on speed until it hits something. If you miss the target you've got problems: you only have one ball and have to chase round like a lunatic trying to get it back. Once all the monsters have gone you get a different shaped screen with more intelligent monsters, ten screens in all.

A great game from the same source as *Killer Gorilla*. It shows shows — K A

From MICRO POWER
Format cassette [illegible]
Price £6.95
Graphics KKK
Playability KKK
Addictiveness [illegible]

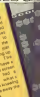
TARZAN K K
BBC

The game's macho character on the front cover performing major dental surgery on a crocodile bears little resemblance to the wimp in leopard skin Y-fronts who presents himself ready for action on the screen. Nevertheless this is an engaging if rather simple game.

Tarzan, primal urges flailing in the wind, swings through the jungle to rescue Jane from a fate worse than death (assuming she wants to be rescued). A grand total of four screens, rather minimal these days, containing rivers, logs, various animals and a certain amount of poetic license in the form of lifts, a feature noticeably absent from most safari trips.

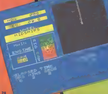
This is not a game that relies heavily on the quality of its graphics and the sound has overtones of a strangled synthesiser but it does contain enough novelty to make it enjoyable and the level of difficulty is just enough to stop you giving up in total despair. The demonstration modes have a way of flashing off the screen just before you've had a chance to see what's happening, but then knowing too much would take away the excitement. — K A

From ALLIGATA
Format cassette
Price £7.95
Graphics K
Playability KK
Addictiveness KK



BLUE RIBAND Spectrum 48K K K

NOT THE BELGRANO



A strategic simulation in which you captain a ferry boat round a group of islands docking [illegible] each. There are three displays: bridge controls with engine telegraph and wheel plus the radar which is useful for approaches; a chart of the whole area with the ship's position and [illegible] on which you can study the [illegible] problems.

You set your speed and course then move to the chart to track your progress [illegible] hurry up made [illegible] passengers [illegible] your near an [illegible] back to the [illegible] The [illegible] very difficult a [illegible] might have [illegible] shown [illegible] complex [illegible] The [illegible] ports [illegible] impressive [illegible] — JC

From CCS
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: K
Playability KK
Addictiveness KK

SWAG

K

BBC

Games seem to fall out of Micro Power like the hair from a fatout victim. No sooner do the last let get shovelled out the door than a new let fall through the ceiling.

Swag latest of the new let is a two-player game where the noble and very macho art of burglary is given a bad name by two amed characters parading around in black masks and striped jerseys.

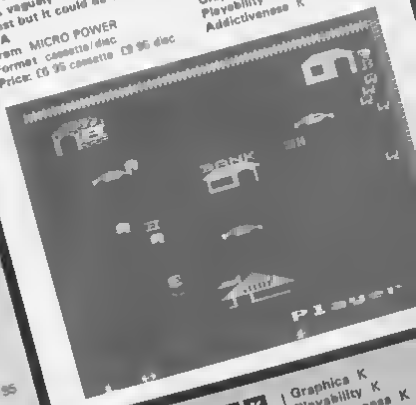
On the screen is a let of black, three police cars, two houses a shop a bank and a smattering of droids. The idea is for each player to run off with £50 000 before his opponent. That s the easy bit. The hard bits are coping with the droids and translating the mistakes in the instructions. Mere ammunition is given for depositing. Get in the bank and chasing police cars can be lost by drinking a can of beer — the one that ripe apart the livers the others can t reach?

The droids are called Percys and Henrys. Percys chase one player. Henrys chase the other but they can be converted by shooting them. If the wrong one touches a player he gets sent back to his house minus any goodies he s carrying. The same thing applies if you get shot by your opponent or if he runs over certain things on the screen and the winner is the first one to get the ¼ mils back to his house.

A vaguely interesting game, worse than some better than most but it could do with some more interesting graphics — **K A**

From MICRO POWER
Format: cassette/disc
Price: £6 95 cassette £8 95 disc

Graphics K
Playability KK
Addictiveness K



PLUTONIUM PLUNDER

K K

BBC

MENTAL BLOCK

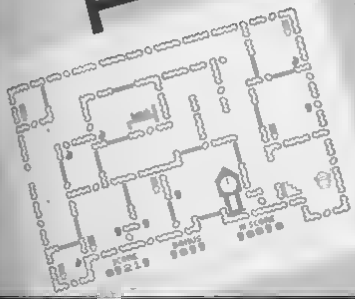
Plutonium Plunder! The name conjures up visions of hazed charred blackened bodies giant mutated rats and the possibility of at least one evening s good solid entertainment. In fact, it's not the easiest of games to play — but who needs it anyway?

Yes another sliding block game. This time the blocks are Hexoid pods with a smattering of plutonium canisters dotted around. Clear a path through the pods so that the canisters can be shunted into place behind a safety barrier while being attacked by gnomes which guard (guarden gnomes?) athe eres. Life can be made slightly easier with a little gnome control before the canister shuffling begins either the common or garden stun with a quick shot from the hip or the super whazzo mega-mangle meaning a quick shove of a block in the appropriate direction.

Serious problems occur on bumping into the retaining fence which contains slightly more voltage than is required to add a shine to your hair and light up your teeth. Best avoided. Should you be a little slow in performing the allotted task then you re in dee sewage. First the blocks begin to mulmply like rabbits with a truckload of Spanish Fly, then, without warning, disappear leaving a clear screen large numbers of nasties and no protection bar an unresponsive shooter and a fast turn of speed. Needless to say the canisters still have to be shunted to safety.

As I said not an easy game but if you ve the patience to stick with it a reasonable one — **K A**

From MICRO POWER
Format: cassette
Price: £6 95
Graphics K
Playability KK
Addictiveness KK



TRIO Spectrum 48K

K

Trio is a collection of three programs starting with *Dracula s Castle* which consists of running around a maze turning on lights while avoiding bats. In order to kill bats you have to eat garlic. You are under a constant time limit which can be seen on a grandfather clock at the bottom of the screen. When your time runs out Dracula will awake and tour the castle looking for you.

Ascot is a gambling game based on horse racing. You have a choice of betting on a win place or each way after which the race will commence. Not a very original game but probably the best of the three.

Next is *Chaotic Caverns* which is a cheap version of *Amadar* where you go around a maze leaving a trail behind you. After clearing the maze you progress to the next level basically the same thing with a different maze. All three of these games look like type-in games. This is one time I would save my money — **S C**

From SILICON JOY
Format: cassette
Price: £5 95

Graphics K
Playability K
Addictiveness K

THE GREAT SPACE


RACE
MOVI SOFT 2

The first in a series of unique computer aided board games. Well that sounds interesting enough. Computer moderation in a rather amateurish way has been raising its head among role playing game players for some time but as far as I know, this is the first commercial application. The idea is that you tell the computer what's happening on the board and the computer does the book keeping and figures out the results. A.T.RAM stands for *Advanced Tactical Reconnaissance & Attack Mission* and this game pits a Royal Navy Task Force against the US Marine Corps detachment in a military exercise. Both sides have Harriers with different space, carriers missile batteries and air tankers. Players set their ends of the board up strategic targets knock out strategic targets. The magnetic board components are very heavy duty the computer display is packed with info and if the subject matter appeals you'll find this a complex and demanding game. However leaving aside the fact that modern air war has never really held much appeal for me in gaming terms my impression is that A.T.RAM combines many of the disadvantages of advanced board games with few of any of their assets. The information entry is to begin with at least extremely difficult requiring much reference to the Operations Manual while the board doesn't on the face of it seem to offer much in the way of variety for the future. I can see a big future for computer moderation along the general lines of this game but only if it helps the players relieving them of the drudgery and letting them get on with the brainwork which A.T.RAM fails to do. I think the designers would have been better off starting with a known wargame concept the Battle of Waterloo say rather plunging themselves and us in at the deep end. Over ambitious and pointing in the wrong direction. **J C**

A.T.RAM Spectrum 48K K

From: ATRAM
Format: cassette/k
Price £14 95
Graphics K
Playability K
Addictiveness Mach 0

FIGHTER PILOT
CBM 64 K K K

At last Digital Integration's award winning *Fighter Pilot* has been converted for the 64. For those of you that have been keeping your head in the sand, *Fighter Pilot* is a superb simulation where you take the controls of an US Eagle air superiority fighter.

In this air-to-air combat game the object is to defend your base airfields from attacking aircraft above. When you have taken off you then have to find your enemy's location using radar and flight computer. Having done this the dogfight begins with the enemy manoeuvring to gain advantage. When you have been damaged this is indicated by a colour change on the aircraft's symbol on your radar. You then have the option to continue fighting or land for repairs. All this is shown in excellent 3D graphic animation.

The only difference I could find with the Commodore version is that it is much more centrefaldsh than the Spectrum's and has slightly better sound. Otherwise both versions are identical in every way. **S C**

From: DIGITAL INTEGRATION
Format: cassette
Price £7 95
Graphics KKK
Playability KKK
Addictiveness KKK

Four Minutes To Zero Ice Station Zero
In Search Of Angels Quann Tulla Feena
Cuddles K K K

Pure text adventures seem to be becoming a threatened species of late. There seems to be a general feeling that to sell a program has to contain graphics. Doesn't matter how tacky how irrelevant to the plot line how much memory is wasted we gotta have them pictures. A good counter to what I for one see as a pernicious trend is this collection of six packet money programs from 8th Day a new Merseyside outfit.

The packaging is understandably minimal a plain black wrapper in every case although you do get a natty plastic rack if you purchase all six. There's nothing cut price about the quality however. As far as I could see each of these is a well thought out properly plotted adventure. Better still every one is on a different theme. The nearest to the hackneyed elfs Sword and Sorcery shlock is *Feena* but this concerning barbarians. The vital thing is to keep the fairies happy one way being to swap a human baby for their changeling a bit naughty this.

Four Minutes to Midnight seems to be the most advanced program and pits you against a past catastrophe world. The object is to rebuild civilisation from the ruins by assembling a team of capable and technically skilled people. To try mind this goes one better than *The Hobbit* in terms of human interaction and displays genuine originality. *Cuddles* is a bit on the cute side — you are a bored toddler and you have to escape from your cot and get past nanny to sample the delights of the outside world.

Ice Station Zero owes something to the dreadful Alistair Maclean story — for Zero read Zebra — it's a thriller set on the Arctic Icepack. The obligatory space adventure is represented in the form of *Quann Tulla* in which you have to get a crippled starship working again. *In Search of Angels* is a Fleming style spy story full of the obligatory souped-up sportscars full of gadgetry.

A lot of ground has been covered here all six packages taken together cost the same as two normally priced Spectrum programs but represent months of playing time. This is the first time I've encountered software at a reasonable price which sacrifices almost nothing in the way of quality. Surely this and not peculiar security devices is the answer to piracy? —**F F**

From: 8th DAY SOFTWARE
Format: cassette
Price £1 99 each
Graphics N/A
Playability KKK
Addictiveness KKK

You'd better get the hang of this. One day you might be up here for real.

Space Shuttle.
The flight simulation program that leaves others earthbound.
Developed with NASA's assistance to turn your computer into Columbia's Flight Deck.
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K K

ASSIGNMENT EAST BERLIN

Spectrum 48K

BERLIN GAME

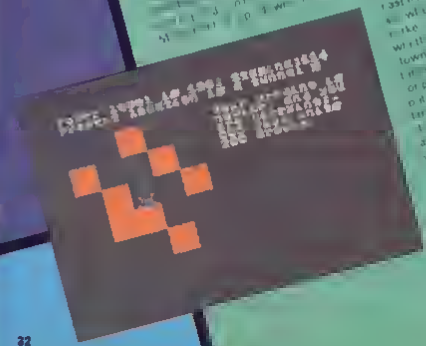
Am ... tec ...
From S ...
Format ...
Price £6.95
Graphics N ...
Playability K
Addictiveness ...

K

BARROWQUEST Spectrum 48K

GOING UNDERGROUND

Any adventure game that bears ... Strictly ... of ... marvellous ... playing ... live ... and ... with a ... of a ... name ... which ... the ... opens ... recover a ... and ... do ... the ... into the Barrowquest ... of ... lows ... light or ... have ... Spectrum ... if you need the ... keys ... the ... was ... this ... The ... grid represents ... playing ... and ... strategy ... very ... pattern ... interpose ... rotating ... slamming ... shrewdly ... buy ... potentially ... Apart ... swimming ... rooms ... make ... water ... towns ... or ... or ... turns ... rain ... stop ... From CC
Format cassette
Price £5.95
Graphics K
Playability K
Addictiveness KK



K

WARP BBC/Electron

Outside — a dramatic cover featuring Spock with two torches stuck in his eyes. Inside — a rather boring game with a lot of numbers and very little action.

It's a version of the old *Star Trek* game where you pick a space quadrant, fly to it, shoot Klingons if they're there (or sit and ponder the Meaning of Life and a heluva lot of stars if they're not). The level of excitement is well maintained by making sure you know well in advance if anything in the slightest bit unexpected is about to happen.

On a list of useless ways of passing the time of day this sits nicely between counting hairs on a carpet and spending three weeks in a broom cupboard. The game opens with a grid of numbers in the top half of the screen, a plan view of the Starship Enterprise at bottom right and bottom left, a view of lots of stars and a blue and green blob with another Enterprise stuck on it like a Green Shield stamp.

Each of the squares represents a sector of space, the numbers in each square representing the number of Klingons in that sector and the idea is to wipe out all the Klingons in the grid. This in itself is a laughable operation on warping into a sector you activate phasers and position a set of sights over a Klingon. Once you've taken a shot at him he takes a shot at you during which time you can't fire after which you take a shot at him. This effect is like a pair of halfwit boxers with their feet nailed to the floor taking turns to hit each other until one finally falls to the floor a mass of blood and crushed bones.

This ridiculous procedure is repeated, broken only by brief visits to space stations for refuelling until all the Klingons have been obliterated. Then, guess what, another grid followed by another, a total of six in all. When all six are cleared you have to pick around the sectors until you find the missing captain, the sole reason for all this.

This is a boring game.

—K A

From ICON
Format cassette
Price £7.95
Graphics K
Playability K
Addictiveness N

KK

THE OPEN

Spectrum 48K

SEVVY SAVVY

Another of CCS's amazingly elaborate simulations this time golf You get a different Open course — Carnoustie and Turnberry — on each side of the tape Decide the wind direction and force, choose whether to play championship, single or practice rounds and the starting hole Then the real decision making begins — which club to use the direction and force of the stroke and finally most difficult of all, the timing of it Not knowing the first thing about the game, I failed dismally at this stage alternately hooking and slicing The odd balls I did connect with invariably went wrong and by the time I called it a day totally exhausted (I must have set a new high (or do I mean low?) for the course

Can't say I'm crazy about the graphics which are no more than adequate — a pity given such a potentially promising subject as golf courses — but there's no arguing with the depth and subtlety of the mechanics The inlay provides nice and clear if rather daunting charts of the maximum distances for each of the 10 available clubs both from tee and fairway plus wind factors and of the effects of hazards I don't know how many golfers own Spectrums but The Open looks like the perfect thing for rained out or laid up fanatics — **JC**

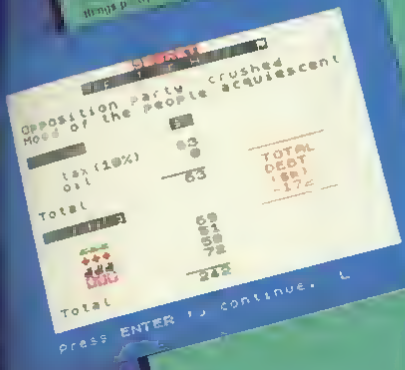
From CCS
Format cassette
Price £5 95
Graphics K
Playability Bogey
Addictiveness Birdie

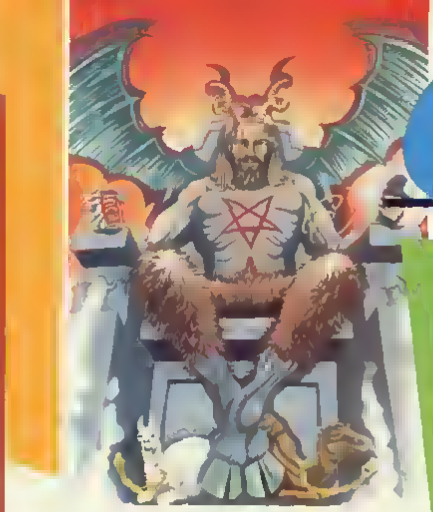
KKK

SUPERPOWER

Spectrum 48K

From C
Format
Price £5 95
Graphics KK
Playability KKK
Addictiveness KK





Goa

JEFF "Animal" MINTER is by any standards a Name of Power in the games designing field Hit after hit has poured from his keyboard latterly with a decidedly zoological theme. Camels, dromedaries, sheep, llamas there's no end to Minter's creative obsession And seemingly no end to the hits, either TONY TAKOUSHI talks to the Oldest Hippie of All

Can you tell us a little bit about your new game?

It's called *Mama Llama*

What does it involve? And will you be following Tony Crowther's example of a smooth-scrolling game?

Well, not so slavishly It's going to be a strange game

Why are your games so strange?

Probably because I'm so weird! I've had some superb music especially written for the game by James Lisney (the Baughurst piano wizard)

That sounds like hype

Well it sounds like hype yes — but I won't be selling it on the strength of the music. I'm not going to be mentioning it in the adverts and I'm not going to say Hey, this has got eight billion screens! I'm not going to do that

Why did you mention eight billion screens!

Because of the current mega game trend I can translate these terms For mega-game read game with lots of screens and for cartoon style animation read sprites with little lines around them They are fashionable things everybody is bringing out games with loads of playing area but never mind if they don't play well

Does that matter at the end of the day? Technically they are doing what they set out to do What does it matter if cartoon-style graphics are two sprites?

A game is a whole is not sole on the basis of graphics but some companies do take the line A game is a synergistic combination of many parts — graphics are just one part of it — they can be used as part of a style

You yourself have a style of using sheep and llamas

That's exactly it What I dislike at the moment in the industry are ads that say This game is better than *Jet Set Willy* or This game is the best You can't say the best' anymore We've all reached a certain technical level

What do you mean *THE BEST?* Because it's subjective, everybody has their own tastes.

All the programmers have reached a standard where they can produce games that look nice and are polished' but the thing is you can't say your game is any better than someone else's because people who like my games might not like someone else's games and vice versa I write games for people who like my style If people don't like my style I'm not that bothered

Aren't you producing games to make a living?

"You can't say 'The Best' anymore . we've all reached a certain technical level"

I'm producing games because that's what I like doing because I'm a video games artiste I get lots of letters from people saying they really like *Ancipital* or they didn't like *Ancipital* as much as *Revenge* I like to hear what people like and dislike about my games

On Compunet I get a big kick from putting up a game called *Synchro* and have people take it for free I really enjoyed writing it there was no pressure to produce a particularly marketable game

Aren't you creating your own pressure by saying 'marketable Why not do your own thing, why worry about it?

Well that's what I do now, but at the moment there's so much heavy commercialism in the whole scene that it does tend to look over no matter how much I try and negate it Perhaps I should take a course in Zen and meditation!

What's the response been like to *Ancipital?*

The people who have bought it like it a lot there haven't been any letters saying it's disliked In fact there's been loads and loads of letters saying *Ancipital* is driving people crazy They love it

Again like most my games it tends to suffer at the hands of casual reviewers

What do you mean by casual reviewers?

Guys who are given thirty tapes to review in an afternoon so they try and play each game in five minutes — and for one of my games that's a pretty damn stupid way to try and play

By your own admission a lot of your games are shoot em ups so why shouldn't they be able to review it in five minutes?

Well look at *Ancipital* It's a shoot em-up but with that lot more Stuff like *Metrix* and Grindrunner admittedly could be reviewed in five minutes but take *Revenge* if you played it for five minutes you'd only see the first two or three screens, out of a total of 42 Some reviewers of *Ancipital* don't even bother to read the instructions they don't know what they're doing The first time Help screens have been introduced into an arcade game and they don't mention them! I saw a review where it said there were 81 screens in *Ancipital* where it says at least four times in the instructions there are 100 screens

Let's move on a little, what is it about sheep and llamas you like so much?

I like them because they're so hairy

You like hairy things ?

Plenty to grab hold of

What do you see in the future?

I hope there's a big crash in the market I really hope the big heavy commercial outfits crash

But they're the ones taking over now?

They are taking over and it's all so cynical

In what way is it corrupt?

There is corruption — you get chart hyping

Isn't it a relatively new thing for software?

It is it's all going the wrong way

So it's a young industry that's going full circle like the video and record industries?

It's not even like the record industry People aren't being encouraged to develop their own

atbuster

Distributors don't buy a game if it s original they buy games with lots of hype That's bad news

styles The distributors buy a certain type of game a game with pretty graphics and backed by full page colour ads They don t look to see if a game is different or original They buy games with a lot of hype behind them and programmers with really good games may not be able to get their games sold That is bad news when a distributor can lock you out like that I have had the same trouble with *Ancipital* The distributors have gone for something else – they haven t even looked at *Ancipital*

How can you be sure they haven t seen it?

Because they would have bought it!

That s s very complacent attitude.

OK t s a complacent attitude but t s not s

"Some reviewers don't even bother to read instructions they don't know what they're doing"

has game It s big hit and the response I ve had from people who bought it is that they ve loved it So what the hell more do they want?

Have you not spoken to the distributors over the problem. Why aren t they buying it?

It s like talking to a brick wall They go on about marketing – what it comes down to basically is that they buy stuff with hype behind it

So they re saying to you take X number of colour page ads and we'll buy the game off you?

They re not saying that but just look at the games they're buying! US Gold and Ocean! Ocean have something like 18 pages of colour ads in the computer press Look at any Ocean game and compare it to some of mine and you can t say it s better I ve got one of the largest followings of people who like my style of game in the country I ve worked hard to develop a following and I like to think I satisfy them It annoys me when these guys can t get hold of my games because it gives the pirates a chance to step in

Do you have any plans to write for other machines such as Amstrad or MSX?

We will probably be doing some conversions for MSX and Amstrad

So you're talking conversions rather than writing new games?

I personally wouldn t write on the Amstrad

Why – no sprites?

I don t think I could give it my best I d be writing in Z80 on a machine that was totally bit mapped

Again – no sprites.

It's not or much that I can t use machines without any sprites because I use the VIC quite well I m now used to the style of development using sprites, and I think I write better games with a sprite based machine

You passionately believe in games – it's not just a job for you?

Oh no it s not really a job at all it's something I would be doing anyway if I had a normal job

I've spoken to many people throughout the industry and I've mentioned Jeff Minter and they've said Jeff isn t well liked I personally have said to them It's because you have such strong beliefs on games and gaming styles. Do you think that s the reason why people tend to switch off when one says Jeff Minter and Llamasoft?

Well maybe I m just apart from the rest of the industry I m not doing what they re doing

Which is ?

Look the main reason these guys have formed s software house is to make a lot of money Every other software house is run by people who aren t really games hackers at heart and they don t get s kick out of designing video games

They're just in it for the money?

To different levels Someone like Taskset is different because these guys like games and enjoy designing What I see is that no other software house barring Taskset is developing a style of their own

I tend to be a little more experimental I do games because I like to do that game People

"I've always been into Pink Floyd and that sort of thing. It's the way I'm most relaxed"

who like my games tend to be very passionately into them or don t like them at all – there s very little middle ground

I don t release a lot of titles because it s very cynical just to flood the market

"I like Taskset – their stuff is witty and pretty original Activision's is nicely done with good ideas – the games are simple and enjoyable to play"

You don t plan to release a game very two or three weeks?

No! Say somebody likes my games and suddenly I start producing three games a month how a the poor kid going to be able to buy all these games?

So you're talking quality A game can be produced to a far higher standard over two or three months

I m not a particularly fast coder – I like to tinker around with the stuff

What do you say to people like Tony Crowther who knock out a game in two weeks?

Well I think he s a talented programmer but I can t say I m enthralled with his stuff It s good, it s very competently coded but there s nothing very original there *Loco* was an arcade game then there was *Son of Blagger* a scrolling *Manic Miner* then *Potty Pigeon*, *Monty Mole* and *Suicide Express* – all of which are variations on the smooth scroll theme

CONTINUED OVER PAGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

Goatbuster

Who else do you like in the industry?

Of the English lot very few. I like Taskset because their stuff is witty and pretty original. I play some of the Activision stuff it's very nicely done with good ideas — the games are simple but enjoyable. *HERO* and *Toy Bizarre* especially. *Pitfall 2* is a great game on the VCS. I've always respected Activision from early days when I owned a VCS. They bought out *Activision Tennis* which is about two-thirds as good as Psion's version but it was written in 2K!

Why did you call your company Llamasoft?

I'd always been notorious at school for being into camels and llamas were a natural progression being camel related. I read about them in a book when I was at sixth form. I knew they existed but I saw pictures of them and thought Wow these beasts are really nice.

Why the old-hippy style? Why the beard and long hair?

It's just the way I am really. I've always been into Pink Floyd and that sort of thing. It's the way I'm most relaxed. I'm not doing it for publicity as some cynical people would say.

But you do get a lot of publicity — you have a high profile in the industry!

It's nice but I don't go out there looking for it.

'There are times when I feel like quitting, but I'll always be writing games.'

What about Interceptor Micros? In a lot of their recent games they've been openly courting you by using characters like Jeff the Jippy Jester and Llamaburgers in their games.

That's their bad luck, not mine. For some reason they dislike me. I haven't upset them knowingly. I actually thought Interceptor were looking up

when they released *Sheep City*. It wasn't brilliantly programmed but it was an original concept. I thought they had got their act together when they suddenly started doing *Manic Miner* stuff and more arcade clones. But a lot of companies do clones. They're no worse than anyone else ever cloning.

Are you getting to the stage where you want to drop everything and go away and forget it?

Yes. There are times when I feel like quitting. But I would always be writing games anyway. I'm going to carry on writing games but I'm not going to mind if they don't get into the week's mega funky top thirty! In the early days charts were OK because they were put together by guys who ran computer shops like the one in the VIC centre where the guys would show you all the games. It was representative then: a good game would do well — a bad game would bomb. Nowadays all the charts reflect is who got the most efficient marketing organisation or who the distributors have designed to buy from this month. It's just doesn't mean anything.

What games would you personally take to a desert island?

Rescue on Fractalus! Star Raiders, obviously, probably *Elite* when I want a more intellectual version of *Star Raiders*. *Elite* is a thinking man's *Star Raiders*.

Should we ban the bomb?

Yes: we certainly should!

Are you in favour of the Greenham Women?

Yes. They're doing an important job down there while other people down there are playing at soldiers.

There is a distinct lack of men though. Do you think men should go down and give them support?

If they want to make a feminist point at the same time that doesn't really bother me because they're making a very important point about cruise missiles in the first place. The feminist issue is their trip — I'm not exactly a sexist bloke.

Now you mention it, which do you prefer — male or female llamas?

Female ones of course! What do you take me for?

The ORIGIN of the SPECIES

by JEFF MINTER

For the first time anywhere in BIG K, the rock-'em sock-'em official history of Llamasoft from the Hairy One himself!

FIRST CONTACT with a micro 1978 so far as I can remember, at 6th Form. It was an 8K PET with the calculator keyboard. Taught myself BASIC, wrote games, found out games needed speed, taught myself machine language.

Left 6th Form, went to university in Norwich arrived only with a ZX80 I'd saved for six months to buy and an old TV I'd got for a fiver. While I was there I (a) bought an Atari VCS (b) did a little illicit hacking on the resident VAX mainframe, (c) got caught and hammered for the aforementioned hacking, (d) spent quite a little time on the biology lab's Apple systems which were my first experience of the Disc Drive (may its name be eternally praised). Eventually (e) got kicked out 'cos I was supposed to be doing maths and physics. My plans to be allowed to transfer to computing fell upon deaf ears (at least I *think* he was deaf).

Got back, obtained a ZX81 (wow!), started going to Oxford Poly. Wrote some ZX81 games which were sold by DKTronics. Designed their graphics ROM (note two little llamas and initials 'JM' therein testify to the design) and wrote machine code versions of *Centipede* and *Space Invaders* using said ROM. Got very nasty virus infection, quite ill for three months, had to leave Poly. Got hold of VIC-20. Wrote tape of ten little games for DKTronics. (There's a collectors' item for anyone who still has one!) Had disagreement with DKTronics over ZX81 graphics ROM. Decided to go solo!

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Bought M/C Monitor for VIC! Bought 16K Expansion and Motherhood for VIC!! Teamed up with R.P. Jones who was to help me with the venture. Wrote *Defenda* painfully slowly. Went to VIC show in '82 and people actually *bought Defenda* (wow!) Met guy from American software house HES and did deal at ROM *Defenda* (we called it *Aggressor*). Wrote game called *Ratman*. Name was thrilled with it but launched it anyway. Wrote *Traxx*. Much better! Well pleased with it. Had argument with Jones. Decided it would be best if we each followed our own destinies. Did PCW Show in September '82, last ever show with RPJ. Show finished, we went home RPJ reclaimed the stuff he'd lent me, we were alone. Solo. No hassles.

Sat down for a week, wrote a little thing called *Gridrunner*.

BLAMM! Phone call from the States at two in the morning, they're going crazy, been playing it six hours solid, can I code it for the 64? Write *Grid* for the 64. Can I code it for Atari? In two weeks? On ROM? Go out, buy Atari, buy *De Re Atari* book, buy disc drive, borrow mate's assembler editor. Write *Grid* again. Then write *Attack of the Mutant Camels* for the 64, then *Laser Zone* for the VIC — and therein lie the best series I've ever made — then go on holiday for a week, 'cos I'm nearly burned out. Come back, go to the States to show in San Francisco, listen at Rock Radio station KMEL 106FM, the Beast of the Bay (So *that's* where 106 comes from, okay?) Return. Write *Matrix* for VIC and 64. Write *Laser Zone* for 64. Go to show in Chicago, see an arcade game called *Chameleon* which HES had to rights to but never programmed. It was sick. Come back. Enlist the services of the Benghurst Piano Wizard to write *Never Swover*. Also write *Mosquitoids Llamas* for the VIC. Launch *HD* and *Mosquitoids* at PCW. Go home, write *Revenge*, launch at YC Xmas Show. Go skiing. Come back, write *Hell Gate* for VIC and 64. Write *Sheep in Space* and listen to Jethro Tull's *Broadsword* and the *Beast* a lot. Go to San Francisco again. Argue with HES because they won't take *Revenge*. They assure me that their marketing people know exactly what's right for the USA. I attempt to prove them wrong and draw large and enthusiastic crowds when I demo *Revenge* in the show. HES ignore the evidence!

I listen at KMEL 106FM some more, then fly home. People finally stop telling me to get my hair cut.

Come *Sheep* at Radio 1 show in Birmingham, let the players turn up a couple of bugs, fix those and launch *Sheep*. Read *De Re Atari* again and decide that you could do some fancy things with it if you wanted to. Learn the Atari. Write *AMC* for the Atari. Mote of mine transfers *Mote* at the 64. He comes down for a while, he codes *Never Swover* onto the Atari and I sit and write *Aneijolat*. HES go bankrupt. I demo *Aneijolat* in D&D Show in London, people like it. Finish off *Aneijolat* and launch in PCW Show. Notice that people are getting heavily into my newsletter!

Go at Peru and have amazing experiences with llamas.

Come back with idea for *Mama Llama*. Drink last of my Inca Kola. Start coding. Tony Takoushi comes down and does killer interview for BIG K. Stay at home coding and miss party. Finish backgrounds. Write title. Finish, go at bed. Try to stop thinking of goats. Go at sleep.

zzzzzzzzzz

LLAMASOFT GAMES

ONE HUMP OR TWO..?

AN OVERVIEW OF LLAMASOFT'S SHEEPOIO SOFTWARE

BY BILL BENNETT

[illegible] Jeff Minter [illegible] will to [illegible] world [illegible] For *Metal G[illegible]* [illegible] for *Telesa[illegible]* [illegible] *Sheep in Space* [illegible] however [illegible] alternatively as Animal Minter or "Yak the Hairy" names which could *we* on as long as Ziggy Stardust.

References to the early seventies are no accident. In many ways Jeff lives in a hippy timewarp. With a gigantic coat, long hair and desert boots, Yak the Hairy" looks as if he has just stepped off the Marrakesh Express. He could be a guest at Neil's (Young Ones) party. But make no mistake: his work marks him out as a true child of the micro-revolution.

Arcade acolytes eagerly await the next software sensation from Minter's Llamasoft label in the same way that schoolgirls queue for Duran Duran videos and Pates queue for meat. Each of the carefully crafted kilobyte confections is played, zapped and inwardly digested by fanatics who want nothing more than "a good heavy blast the way Jeff writes 'em". His cult following can be attributed to a number of [illegible] about his games [illegible] himself, and [illegible] people's game [illegible] is a compulsive [illegible] knows how to [illegible] flowing. That is [illegible] out is funch [illegible] *Star Wars* [illegible] between bout [illegible]

To make th[illegible] Jeff [illegible] mug-scenario [illegible] war on Earth [illegible] Zryaxian Empire [illegible] Jeff has read the sci[illegible] book too many [illegible] this will prel[illegible] thinking of [illegible] weapon with Zryaxian [illegible] is psychotic [illegible] here the [illegible] natural order of [illegible] be blasted [illegible] The sonic motif is keep po[illegible] up and zapping you [illegible] time again. Camels llamas sheep half man half goat beast and sweep quinea pigs [illegible] the Llamasoft cosmos. There [illegible] like *pyramids* with winking eye — shades of the Freemasons keep appearing. Other Minteresque motifs include CND symbols references to rock bands like Genesis and Pink Floyd and cross references [illegible] software

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The Games

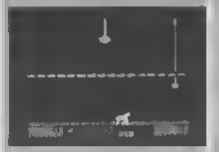
TRAXX

Traxx s a game [illegible] being the silliest Llamasoft game to date. The idea s that you must capture squares while avoiding bugs that float about. It s similar in concept to the Atari game *Qix*, though saner and cruder.

METAGALACTIC LLAMAS BATTLE AT THE EDGE OF TIME

What a [illegible] *Metagalactic Llamas* s [illegible] a game to play at the dinner table. Llamas spit metagalactic llamas spit something pink, totally disgusting and lethal. Pitched against the salivating llamas are some hellish looking Zryxian cyberg arachnid mutants. Shooting the spiders will earn you points but hitting the threads they hang on can be risky. When a shot thread snaps, the spider falls to earth, metamorphoses and chases the llama. You can stil get to blast at the spiders as they scuttle over good old terra firma by bouncing your llama s spit off a horizontal force field controlled by the up and down action of [illegible]

[illegible] the original [illegible] for the game [illegible] 20. An improved [illegible] game runs on [illegible] 64. Spectrum [illegible] version [illegible] Software [illegible] *Meta* [illegible] an orbital [illegible] was a clear [illegible] under the [illegible] of Mr [illegible]



GRIDRUNNER

[illegible] *Gridrunner* [illegible] on the old Atari game *Centipedes*. Mine [illegible] easy to spot as Mr Bee [illegible] stand of taking [illegible] of a gallery [illegible] of the old classic [illegible] deepest space. Bit Bit and Little Weed [illegible] again now [illegible] the avid [illegible] of Zryxian Empire. You [illegible] space [illegible] which [illegible] lower portion of a big red grid. [illegible] shame that space stuff of them. Your task [illegible] has they [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible]

Still the game s [illegible] of *Centipedes*. Firstly [illegible] the X Zapper s which patrols the fringes of the grid taking pot shots at you and yours. They [illegible]

[illegible] 065 [illegible] fatigue [illegible] "G [illegible] another [illegible] twenty [illegible] the game [illegible] was [illegible] unsophisticated [illegible] game [illegible] their claws on.

LASER ZONE

Laser Zone [illegible] on [illegible] the X [illegible] Pacman [illegible] The program [illegible] abuse of the joystick. X Zapper [illegible] can [illegible] the grid shoot [illegible] switches that [illegible] Funny how [illegible] what it felt like. Mr [illegible] a right [illegible] horizontal zapper [illegible] up and [illegible]

down into [illegible] vertical one. Initially the zapper [illegible] need to fire [illegible] space. However you should the aliens [illegible] of the sides of the grid they will draw towards the zapper in order to destroy it. You can get around this by controlling your zapper to fire a diagonal shot. However you must take care not to blast the other zapper. The key to mastering *Laser Zone* is mastering the diagonal shooting technique.

HOVER BOVVER

Of all the Llamasoft games *Hover Bovver* stands out as being different. It is a distinctly suburban game set in a large back garden.

The aim of the game is to cut a lawn. It sounds simple. Yet the whole deal is complicated by the

YOU'VE NEVER PLAYED A GAME LIKE THIS BEFORE

neighbours, whose mower you "borrowed" to mow the lawn. You avoid them or better still get your dog on them. Shouting "Down, Shep" doesn't work. This is more a subtlety game than a blaster.

Hover Bovver s available on both the 64 and the Atari range. There s little difference between the versions, yet the game that slightly left on the Atari in the Llamasoft news article *The Nature of the Beast*. Jeff writes that the most [illegible] of the Atari [illegible] the colour effects [illegible] eyeballs.

SHEEP IN SPACE

Slightly [illegible] sequel of **Defender**, **Sheep in Space** is set in surreal surroundings with a planet surface at the bottom and top of the screen. The side of a large [illegible] of doughnut with [illegible] eight miles round. A number of these ecosystems [illegible] supply a human [illegible] piecemeally located [illegible] lounge of the Zryxian [illegible]

Neutrals [illegible] all kind [illegible] humans [illegible] sheep will [illegible] convected [illegible] chops [illegible] combat [illegible] mixed [illegible] Dog [illegible]

ATTACK OF THE MUTANT CAMELS

REVENGE OF THE MUTANT CAMELS

ANCIPITAL


1 REM OCTONIUM MOON
2 REM 1984 AUTHOR:SCHMANENFLUGEL
REM COPYRIGHT OCTOSOFT
SCHMANENFLUGEL/TRENKER
4
5 POINTS%=1:PROCINIT
6 MODE5:VDU5
7:PROCSETUP
9997:
9998:
9999:
10000 PROLVDU
10001 T=FNINERTIA
10002 IFFNL AND(Z>-1 AND ABS(Y) > FNOLLA
10003 IFFNL AND Y 2M*1 LANDING SPEED
10004 ELSE IFFNL
10005 IF(Y>0)*GOTO 12000
10006 IFFNL OR FNO GOTO 12000
10007 IFFNL
10008 PROLIN
10009 IF FNS AND FNS( ) GOTO 1
10010 V=V+GRAVITY
10011 AW=X*SIN(Y):IF W<0 THEN 1
10012 IF Z 1200 THEN 1
10013 PROCINSTRUM
10014 GOTO 8000
10191:
10999:
11000 DEF PROCSETUP
11002 VX=RND(200)-100
11003 VDU19,2,2,2,0,0,0
11004 ENDPROC

OCTONIUM MOON

Your mission—land on the famous and deadly moon, mine the priceless ore ... and get away alive!

Controls

Z,X Rotate left/right

A Abort

Light Thrust

Return heavy Thrust

K Jettison fuel

J Jettison Octonium

```
9007 GAINX=0
9010 GCOL1,2
9012 P=RND(200)+100
9013 O=10:PERIOD=RND(75)+125:PHASE=RND(
9014 W=RND(300)+100
9020 FORXX=0TO1280 STEP8 :IF XXMOD63=1
=RND(14)-8
9025 IF FNFLAT PROCFLAT
9030 MOVEXX,80:DRAWXX,YX+80
9040 YX=YX+10*SIN(XX/PERIOD+PHASE):YX=Y
1:RND(4) 2:*4:G:IFYX<OYX= YX
9050 NEXT
9060 GCOL0,7:FORT=1 TO50
9061 SX=RND(1280):TX=RND(944):80:IF POI
N(SX,TX) NEXT GOTO9063
9062 PLOT69,SX,TX:NEXT
9063IF YX>900 GOTO9070
9074 MOVE 0,80:GCOL0,3:DRAW1280,80
9075 MOVE 22,10:DRAW 160,10:DRAW160,44:
DRAW 22,44:DRAW 22,10:MOVE92,10:DRAW92,4
4
9080 IF FUELX>500 GCOL0,2 ELSE GCOL0,1
9082MOVE200,40:DRAWFUELX/2:200,40
9085 GCOL0,3:FORO=0TO9:PLOT69,200+O:25
6:NEXT
9087 PR=1:GAINX=0
9088 A=40:B=1010:X=RND(3)+2:Y=RND(2) 6
9090 ENDPROC
9095:
9099:
9100 DEFPROCLANDED
9105FOR T=0 TO 200 STEP 20
9110SOUND1,-15,T,1:NEXT
9115GAINX=GAINX:1000*RND(1)*PR:FUELX=F
UELX+300*RND(1)+80
9120 LX=X:LY=Y:X=0:Y=.5:PR=PR+1:PROCERA
SE
```

```
9125 IF FUELX 500 GCOL0,1 ELSE GCOL0,2
9127MOVE 200,40:DRAW FUELX/2:200,40
9130 IF FUELX>500 FF=0
9150 ENDPROC
9170:
9175:
9200 DEFPROCINSTRUM
9210 MOVE 30,40:IFABS(X) 1GCOL0,2 ELSE
GCOL0,1:SOUND2, 3,99,1
9212 VDU 240
9214 MOVE 96,40:IF Y 2GCOL0,2 ELSE GC
0,1:SOUND1, 8,140,1
9216 VDU240
9221
9225GCOL0,0:MOVEFUELX/2+200,40:DRAWFUEL
X/2:255,40
9230 IF FNCHCOL FF=1:GCOL0,1:MOVE200,4
DRAW200:FUELX/2,40:ENDPROC
9235 IF FUELX 500 SOUND2, 9,200,1:ENDPR
9245:
9250 ENDPROC
9255:
9260:
9275:
9280:
9285 DEFPROCINIT
9300VDU23,240,255,255,255,255,255,255,2
,255
9305VDU23,230,24,76,90,90,36,60,90,195
9306VDU23,231,4,10,10,17,21,14,10,27
9307VDU23,232,14,2,2,24,3,3,26,22,16
9308VDU23,233,14,2,2,24,3,3,26,22,16
9309VDU23,234,1,13,19,20,20,19,13,1
9310VDU23,235,7,10,21,17,17,10,10,4
35,255
9311:
9312 VDU5
9320 DIMA$(4):FOR1=1TO4:A$(1)=CHR$(1+23
0):NEXT
9323 SFUELX=1000:FUELX=SFUELX:LFUELX=SF
UELX
9324:
9325 DEFFNE=POINT(A:50:2*X,B 30:Y)=2
9326 DEFFND=POINT(A:8:2*X,B 30:Y)=2
9327 DEFFNS=(RND(1) 9)
9328 DEFFNFLAT=(RND(1)/.021
9329 DEFFNL=(POINT(A:2*X:32,B+Y 32)=1)
/3500
9330 DEFFNINERTIA=(FUELX+WEIGHTX:GAINX)
9334:
9335 WEIGHTX=1000
9336GRAVITY=.05
9337 PX=2
9338 FF=0
9339 M$=""
9345 POINTSX=0
9390 ENDPROC
9395:
9396:
9400 DEFPROCVDU
9405 MOVE A-X,B Y 4:GCOL0,0:VDU240:MOVE
A,B:GCOL0,7:PRINTA$(PX)
9410MOVE A X:4,B Y+28:GCOL0,0:VDU240
9411 GCOL0,1
9445 ENDPROC
9448:
9449:
9450 DEFPROCFLAT
9455 GX=XX:FORXX=XXTOXX+64STEP8:MOVEXX,
80:DRAWXX,YX+80:NEXT:GCOL0,1:MOVEGX,YX+8
0:DRAWXX,YX+80
9460 GCOL 0,2
9480 ENDPROC
9485:
```

OCTONIUM MOON for BBC

OCTONIUM

MO

```
9684:
9700 DEFPROCIN
9705 C=INKEY(1)
9708 #FX21,0
9710 IF C=90 PX=PX 1:IF PX=0 PX=4
9711 IF C=88 PX=PX+1:IF PX=5 PX=1
9712 IF C=93 THRUST=.2:FLOSS=2:N=5:LEVE
L=-13:PROCTHRUST
9713 IF C=13 THRUST= 35:FLOSS=4:N=5:LEV
EL= 15:PROCTHRUST
9714 IF C=95 THRUST=.5:FLOSS=12:N=6:LEV
EL= 15:PROCTHRUST
9715 IF C=74 AND POINTS% 49 POINTS%=POI
NTS% 50:SOUND0,-15,2,1
9716 IF C=75 AND FUEL%>0 FUEL%=FUEL% 20
:SOUND0,-15,1,1
9740 ENDPROC
9741:
9742:
9745 DEFPROCNOABORT
9747 GCOL0,0:MOVE 200,40:DRAW 1280,40
9749 Y=B/300:X=0:P%=1
9750 FUEL%=0
9751 ENDPROC
9753:
9755:
9765:
9766:
9800 DEFPROCTHRUST
9801 IF FUEL%<0 ENDPROC
9802 SOUND 0,LEVEL,N,5
9804 I=FNINERTIA
9806 X=X-THRUST*(P%=2)/I:THRUST=(P%=4)/
I:Y=Y THRUST*(P%=1)/I:THRUST=(P%=3)/I:FU
EL%=FUEL% FLOSS:Y=Y GRAVITY
9820 IF FUEL%<LFUEL% LFUEL%=FUEL%
9850 ENDPROC
9855:
9856:
9900 DEFPROCERASE
9901 YSEARCH=B+4:ALIMIT=A+26
9903 REPEAT
9904 YSEARCH=YSEARCH 1:IFYSEARCH 0 ALIM
IT=ALIMIT+10:YSEARCH=B14
9905 UNTIL POINTIALIMIT,YSEARCH=1
9906 XSEARCH=ALIMIT
9907 REPEAT
9908 XSEARCH=XSEARCH 1:UNTIL POINTIXSEA
RCH,YSEARCH<>1
9909 GCOL0,0:MOVE XSEARCH*4,YSEARCH:DRA
W XSEARCH+60,YSEARCH
9915 ENDPROC
9920:
9921:
9922:
12000FORT=1TO150.VDU19,0,RND(4),0,0,0:NE
XT:VDU19,0,0,0,0,0:#FX21,0
12005 DX=A+36:EX=B 32
12015 IF M$<>""THENI2050
12017 POINTS%=POINTS%:GAIN%
12020 IF FUEL% 0 M$="LACK OF FUEL":GOTO1
2050
12030 M$="TOUCHDOWN OUTSIDE PLAIN"
12040:
12041:
12050 SOUND0,-15,4,10:SOUND0, 13,5,25:SO
UND0, 12,6,100:SOUND0, 10,6,400:MOVEA,B
24:GCOL0,0:VDU240:MOVEA,B 44:GCOL0,2:VDU
241
12051 MOVE A,B 63:GCOL0,2:VDU240
12053MOVEA,B:GCOL0,0:VDU240:B=B 50:A=A+2
6:FORT=1 TO400:GCOL0,0 (RND(1) .5):PLOT6
9,A+6+(RND(100) 50)*T/500,B 70*(T/500) R
ND(10):NEXT
```

```
12054 MODE7:VDU19,16,1,2,14:PRINT"MISSI
ON FAILED":VDU19,14:PRINT MISSION FAIL
ED":#FX21,1
12055 VDU10,13
12060 VDU26:PRINT"DUE ID:"ME
12061:PRINT" VERTICAL SPEED:"INTIY*
100/10*" M/S":VDU10
12062 VDU26:PRINT"MISSION DATA",IF FUEL
% FUEL%=0
12064 PRINT" FUEL: FUEL%,"OCTONIUM:"POIN
TS
12065 VDU26:PRINT PRESS RETURN FOR ANOT
HER MISSION"
12070 VDU26,1,0,0,0,0
12071:A=INKEY(1):VDU26,1,0,0,0,0:IFA= 1 G
OTO2070
12072 IF A=1 THEN ELSECLS:STOP
12500 STOP
12501:
12502:
12503:
12504 FUEL%=FUEL% 1:FORB=B TOI0GSIEP8
:NINERTIA:FUEL%=FUEL% 4:IF FUEL%<0
PROCNOABORT:NEXT BOOK
12506:GCOL0,0:MOVE A,B 8:VDU240:GCOL0,3:M
OVEA,B 8:VDU233:SOUND, 15,4,1:NEXT:GOTO13
00
12507 GOTO7000
12508 FORB=B TO0GSIEP 4:MOVEA,B:GCOL0
:VDU234:GCOL0,3:MOVEA,B:VDU233:IF POIN
TS,B 24 GOTO12000 ELSE NEXT:GOTO1200
0
12510 MODE7:VDU19,16,1,2,14:PRINT"MISSI
ON ABORTED":VDU19,14:PRINT"MISSION ABO
RTED":IF FUEL% 1 FUEL%=FUEL%
:VDU19,1,1:FORI=1TO7:PRINTIAD(I),SI
NEXT:VDU19,1,4:PRINT" SPACESHIP DATA
:PRINT
12600 LX=FUEL%:LFUEL=INT(LX*100)/LX*
100:LX=INT(LX*100)/LX:LY=LY/100:I=FNINER
TIA:PRINT"MASS OF SPACESHIP: "INTI
:PRINT
12601 PRINT" FUEL IN MAIN TANK ";LX
:PRINT" LOWEST FUEL LEVEL "LFUEL
:PRINT" FUEL LOSS" ELSE IF
FUEL% 0 PRINT" FUEL GAIN"
12602 VDU19,4,1:PRINT" LAST LANDING VELOCI
TY:"INT(LY*100)/100:PRINT"VERTICALLY:"LX
:PRINT" HORIZONTALLY:"LY
:PRINT" OCTONIUM IN CARGO BAY
:PRINT
:PRINT" OCTONIUM IN MOTHERSHIP MAI
N:"POINTS%
:PRINT %
:FORI=1TO7:PRINT
:NEXT
:VDU19,1,1:PRINT"PRESS RETURN
FOR NEXT MISSION "
:VDU19,
:A=INKEY(1):IF A= 1 GOTO12021
12602 FUEL%=FUEL%:GAIN%=0
12603 POINTS
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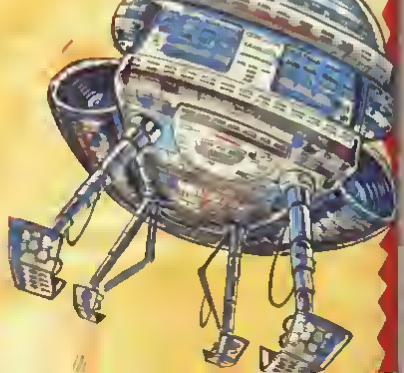


ADVERTISEMENT INDEX

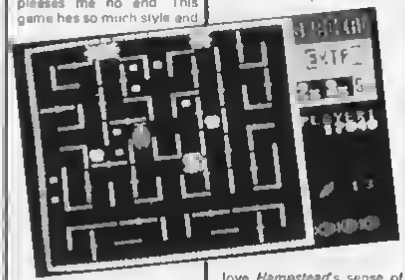
For almost a year now you've been reading reviews with nothing more to go on than a set of enigmatic initials. But our reviewers have names. They have faces. If you prick them, they bleed. And they like playing games. We present, therefore . . . .

GAMES REVIEWERS

JOHN CONQUEST

Afte[illegible] and to be honest during — a long day s slog at those no Ks and one Ks not to mention the no loads the time comes when even the great JC can take no more Sweeping aside the pile of boxes wanting to be evaluated he reaches for his trusty

River Raid (Activision) is still my favourite relaxant I m up round the 200 000 (OK 150 000 on a bad day) mark which may be small potatoes compared to the millionaires I hear about but pleases me no end This game has so much style and



content that even after six months I haven t got tired of it The initial stages are well worn grooves now though I still find the occasional new and more elegant solution not to mention the odd extra points while up round bridge 80 it's still relatively unexplored territory A real classic on the Atari anyway which (having seen the MSX version recently) I shan t be parting with

Bruce Lee (US Gold) is a visually stunning and mechanically superb action game that I can play over and over Kicking and punching leaping and ducking it pushes my tired old reflexes to the limit

Hampstead (Melbourne House) is the current numero uno adventure game though I suppose I ll crack that last 5% sometime and give it up Still at the rate I m going that should be just in time to start in on Lever and Jones rumoured Costa Brava holiday adventure I love *Hampstead*'s sense of humour and, however much I enjoy playing computer games it is refreshing once in a while to have one that's aimed in the general direction of my age bracket

Listen don t ask

Dungeons & Dragons (Intellivision) is the only video game apart from Colecovision s *Ladybug* that isn t gathering dust at the back of the cupboard Quite why I still play *D&D* I don t know as it s been quite a while since I lost even at the hardest level but it has that compulsive quality that makes it ever playable

KIM ALDIS

FOR SHEER entertainment value the current favourite game is putting out next door's cat, which inexplicably flamed on around the time it dumped its bowels on the front doorstep.

On the computer games front picking out a few faves isn't too hard when a game of noughts and crosses is preferable to ninety percent of the dross that passes this way

The ability to last is important in a game and those that do would leave space in a thimble Several of the classics, particularly *Pac-Man*, *Asteroids*, reworked by Acornsoft, or Micro Powers' *Killer Gorilla* get heaved off the shelf for an airing every now and then, but maybe it's in the very nature of comp ter games that they only last a few days before being replaced by some new Hypergalactic-Mega-Monster-Muncher Which is probably why some jerk from Croydon who has problems with two plus two can impress a hick software house from Little Snodbury with his version of noughts and crosses for retarded rate. Hundreds of the things pass through these doors and of the many reviewed only a handful stand out.

Current top of the stack is Acornsoft's *Elite* which, whether the authors like it or not, is always going to be dumped in the same category as *Aviator*. A masterful piece of programming, mainly because of the superb graphics but also, I suspect, because there is always further to go, more weaponry to win and more variety around the corner.

Other favourites culled from the crop include *Frak*, because the graphics are unbelievable and the humour indicates a perverse mind; Micro Powers' *Ghouls*, again because of the graphics, and *Mr Ee*, a recent release from Micro Power which I can't put down.

TONY TAKOUSHI

THE GAMES I play cover the Commodore 64, Atari 800, BBC, Vic 20 and Spectrum micros.

On the 64 front I enjoy a good session of *Super Pipeline* and *Jammin'* (Taskset), *Son of Blagger/Guardian* (Alligata) and *Revenge of the Mutant Camels* (Llamasoft) The Atari has always been one of my favourite micros because of its superlative colours and sound abilities. The games I really enjoy playing are *Star Raiders/Escape From Fractalus (this game is mega for 3D effects in the raster format — it even makes Encounter look slow) Necromancer/ Bandits* and *Pole Position*

The BBC — well, it has to include *Elite* and *Frak*

The Vic 20 has a few classics on it. *Lazerzone* from Llamasoft is still one of THE classic blasts for me it has some of the finest sound effects and action I have ever seen for any micro There is also the now-banned version of *Pac-Man* called *Jelly Monsters*. This version has yet to be beaten by ANY other micro.

Finally, *Omega Race* is one of the toughest and most skilful games on the Vic.

The Spectrum has few games I come back to. The latest one I really enjoy is *Robotron* from Atarisoft. Also *Atic Atac/Deathchase* and *Missile Defence* (Anirog).

At the end of the day I really do spend most of my time on the full size arcade machines I have in my flat. They are *Tempest* (Atari) and *Radarscope* (Nintendo). There ain't nothing like the real thing!

ERS PLAY

BILL BENNETT

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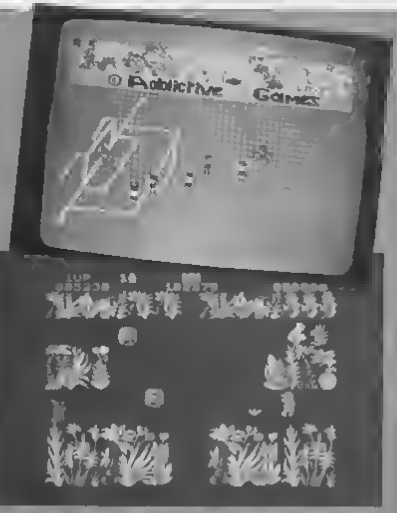


... Wh ... react ... tron ... Both ... of the ... Sp ...

STEVE KEATON

Being something of a fanatical gamester I'll play pretty much anything that'll come to hand. Obviously if I've got more than an hour to kill I'll dig out an adventure and try my luck, but more often than not I'll just dip into a simple shoot 'em up like *Zaxaga* or play *Mine Storm* on the Vectrex. Nothing too complex. I like my fun fast and cute. Alternatively I'll watch some gore (usually Italian) on the Betamax or dive headlong into a pile of comix. I'm just an-everyday sorta guy really

GAMES REVIEWERS PLAY

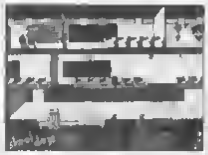
FIN FAHEY

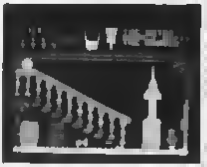
I HAVE an unabashed admiration for arcade adventures such as Mikro gen's *Pyjamarama*, *School-Daze* from Microsphere and the recent Ultimate successor to *Sabre Wulf*, *Knight Lore*. Having said that I have to also admit that I don't spend a huge amount of time playing them. This is because I'm a poor loser and since I'll never be a teenager again and my reflexes are shot to bits by too many late nights and lunch time boozing, I spend more time playing games that require a more thoughtful approach. Of course I always claim this is due to my refined sense of literary aesthetics.

Adventures and strategy games are my real meat: the only problem being that there are very few good ones. So far the adventure game scene has been marked by a profound laziness on the part of software houses although I don't feel that will last. Exceptions are the solid maze and potatoes approach of Level 9, who at least go for sheer scale and Melbourne House who show signs of (gasp) originality.

My nomination for top adventure this year would certainly go to *Hampstead*. Strategy games are stuck in an even deeper slough of naffness and to my mind *Eastern Front* from Atari is so far unsurpassed.

In spite of being a life long pacifist I've also enjoyed playing U.S. Gold's *NATO Commander* (I claim it offers valuable insights into the military mentality). Pet hates? *Kong* clones, *Sword and Sorcery* and tacky little graphics added to pretty adventures in the forlorn hope of making them sale able.



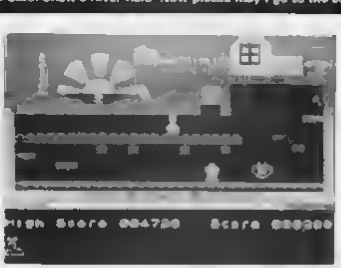


NICKY XIKLUNA

Actually, at the moment I'm still stunned, nay, obsessed with *Ghostbusters*. I think it's great. Not only are design and playability first rate, but the galvanisation of the SID chip into action, has resulted in the most true and pleasing musical arrangement I've ever heard. The speech simulation is unbelievable. More to the point, I never could resist a game that made me laugh.

But that's this week. Last week *Ultimate's Underwurlde* and *Knight Lore* were earthly sentients to Heavenware. I'm a sucker for games of character. *Frak!* is another favourite on that score. Then there's *Ghouls*. And Matthew Smith's *Wet Set Jilly* and *Manic Miner*. Add Mani Minter's crazed fantasies to the ranks of perennials. I also solemnly confess to having been a teenage *Valhalla* groupie. (But now I've grown up, its drab. I'll put Melbourne Houses' Adventure, *Hampstead* in its place in my Hall of Fame.)

My games allegiances are pretty fickle. Software we love is so quickly superseded. If you want an all-time favourite — I'll give you Carol Shaw's *River Raid*. Now please may I go to the ball?



RICHARD BURTON

STOP ANY software reviewer on the street (resist the temptation to press money on him) and ask him to tell you, truthfully, what games he likes to play in his "off-duty" moments. Chances are he'll say — *if he's in one of his rare coherent moods* — that there are several games he'd like to play more often . . . if only he had the time. In reality there's a pile of cassettes and ROM's sitting gathering dust on a corner of his desk waiting for the moment when the flow of new releases ceases and they can be taken out and used again. That moment hasn't arrived yet.

Just such a dusty pile is staring at me as I write. Do I really hear tiny voices pleading "Play me, play me"? If I do they aren't asking for more than they deserve.

When it's been a long night loading up tape after tape the immediacy of a video game system's ROM start-up is very welcome. I still consider the Colecovision to be the finest example of the video game genre and some classic game ROMs are centered in its repertoire. *Mouse Trap* and *Lady Bug* still have me yelling for more after hours of play. Both are excellent examples of addictive challenging gameplay. *River Raid*, of course, is good on any system but Activision's Colecovision edition ranks among my particular favourites. Even the venerable Atari VCS maintains a soft spot in this old gamer's heart by still surprising me with games like *Space Shuttle*, again from Activision. Established favourites like *Ms. Pac-Man* and *Yar's Revenge* are not forgotten when the VCS is trundled out.

Back in the six-load world tape-based offerings it's still the arcaders that I go for but not necessarily the flashy zap 'em ups. Games like Quicksilva's *Ant Attack* and Vortex's *Android 2* I rate for their innovation as much as their gameplay. Well, there's always the exception that proves the rule and Mirro Power's *Ghouls* is great action whichever way you look at it.

Current faves? Well, jockeying for a place in the dust at the moment are *Ghostbusters* and Ultimate's newy, *Knight Lore* — both classics in the making.

Which is, of course, to leave a lot of great games out in the cold, undeservedly. And I plan to rectify that right now because I've got there all here . . . well around here somewhere.

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BIG K ARCADE ALLEY

GO ON, give me something easy to do. I'll do anything you want. I'll fight Frank Bruno I'll swim the Channel I'll run the Marathon. Just please, *please*, don't make me play *Hyper Sports* again.

At first I thought I was ready; I have the audacity to believe that I was prepared. I'd spent months in training on *Track and Field* I'd run for the bus at least twice, I'd plunged my fingers into hot bags of french fries until they were as rock I'd taken gold medals, scored world record points. I seriously felt that I was in the top flight. But I hadn't reckoned with the cunning or ingenuity of the programmers at Konami. 'Cos *Hyper Sports* is a truly Olympian hurdle. *Hyper Sports* makes *Track and Field* look like tiddlywinks.

Now some of you may think I'm exaggerating — well, more's the pity for you. I can assure you that if you are caught unawares by this machine you will need the proverbial oxygen mask before you can say Steve Ovett. It may well look innocent nestling as it does quite innocuously between *Dragon's Lair* and *Driller Killer* vs. *Pac-Man*, but feed the beast 30p and you are in danger of a total physical and emotional breakdown.

The game itself resembles its predecessor in line and form: the usual excellent graphics are complemented perfectly by great sound effects and hilarious visual gags: judges smile sympathetically, contestants weep unashamedly, and nosey arcade attendants laugh hysterically over your shoulder as you fail to lift 150kg for the third time.

As with *Track and Field* the game is divided into 'events' (though there are seven now as opposed to six) and your progression through these is dependent solely on your own ability to satisfy the given criterion of qualification. (If you don't qualify you're back to the money slot and the nosey attendants laugh even louder.)

The first of these devilish disciplines is swimming. The starter gun fires, your man dives into the Olympic length pool (along with five others) and the race on. This all seems quite straightforw really — your fingers pound away at t buttons, the little man ploughs throu the water, the audience cheer — it's easy as falling off a spring-board Th your man drowns. Did the nos attendant tell you that you had to pre the middle button when the 'breath sign appears? No he did not. Did laugh? Yes he did. You start again. Y pound away, your man ploughs throu

DAVID DORRELL takes himself to the outer limits (of financial disaster) sweating it out on Konami's Hyper Sports.

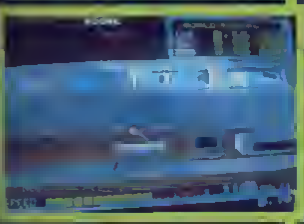
GOING

Is it true? Can it be true? Will tracksuits, marathons sweat and cardiac arrest all go out of fashion just as arcade makers perfect THE ideal Sports Game? Will anyone care?

round. £5.10 and 51 rounds later I go through . . . just. All you have to do is hit the skeets as they fly through your sights. You have to hit twenty to gain the necessary 200 points. I've had easier times juggling chain saws . . . But by the end of the day I could have parted the attendant's quiff at fifty paces. Then it started to get hard.

You're through to the third round, your man runs along the gym floor, he hits the spring board, flips off the long-horse and manages all of one somersault before landing quite unceremoniously on his head in front of the judges. Someone in the corner laughs. If you're really lucky, and you manage to press the buttons fast enough, you can make the necessary four somersaults and land upright. And of course one day you'll find a goose that lays golden eggs.

So runs you've sailed through three events and — if you're the average player — you've notched up an overdraft that looks like a New York phone number. What better then than a quiver or two on the archery field? A birds-eye view allows you to shoot straight at the



the race is ightforward way at the e through ? — it's as oard. Then he nosey d to press 'breathe' t. Did he again. You e through

the water, you press the middle button at the wrong time . . . your swimmer gulps on two litres of chlorinated graphics. Eventually you learn to swim. Eventually the attendant learns how to walk again . . .

Congratulations! After qualifying within the two minute time limit you re on to the second round, 'skeet shooting' (or clay pigeon shooting as we call it) This is of course totally impossible. You get three attempts to qualify for this

CONTINUED ON P. 61

GFOR THE BURN

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The strongmen works up to lift off. Note the authentic flat feet and glove puppet jury

Getting in the swim. The contestant in Lane Three is not waving — he's drowning . . .

target, taking into account — as you are not doubt want to do — the wind speed (a handy anemometer at the side of the screen helps you with this one) and angle of release (a handy attendant at the side of the machine release to help you wit this one).

The triple jump has always confounded me: why do people want to do this? Walking is much easier and a lot more graceful. You are advised to press the jump button rhythmically for best effect and optimum take-off. Rest assured — it is easier to put the Space Shuttle into orbit than it is to get your man through to the next round. If you are still standing, if your fingers are still bleeding then the notion of retribution against Konami and the owners of the arcade will swell within you — just as the power surges through the weightlifters in the sixth and penultimate round.

By banging away furiously at the buttons on the facia you can *fill* your redoubtable strongman with enough strength to lift and jerk the dumbells above his head. The green light goes up, the judges wave and lo! you have made a clean snatch! Now do it again. And again. You may start with a respectable 150kg lift but from there on in it gets harder. And heavier. And hernia etc., Competing as all this is it is as nothing when compared to the pole-vault. The pole-vault is so hard that even brainless attendants will sit in awe-inspired silence as you approach the bar.

The instructions command you to "grasp the player's movements". (sic.) Would there be a judge's inquiry if I did? Run. Press Jump. Thrust the pole into the ground and, concentrating carefully on your timing . . . release the pole. If you don't release the pole then inevitably you come to a sticky end. Unfortunately I'll never know the result. I failed a random dope test just seconds before the start of the seventh event. They asked are how much I'd spent on the damn machine. I told them. Then they told are I was a dope and kicked are not for my own good.

Whilst most arcade sequels content themselves with either "harder" or "faster", *Hyper Sports* takes you "higher, faster, further, sharper and harder". It is no easy game. But it was no mean feat putting it together. No doubt before you can state "Seoul in '88" they'll have a follow-up. It's not enough therefore that you are quicker . . . it is imperative that you are trained all round, because *Hyper Sports* runs rings around the Olympics . . .

DAVID DORRELL

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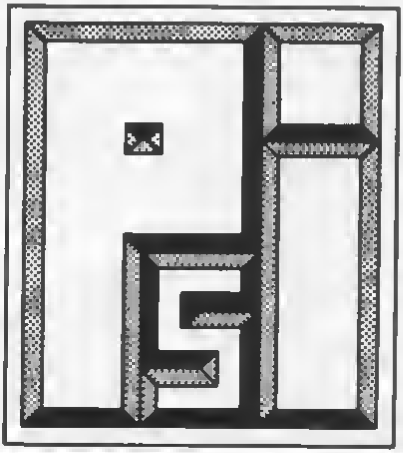

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FRUITB

Good food is one of life's greatest pleasures, so where is it all? Trapped in a tedious concrete maze, surrounded by hostile ghosts who will drain your life energy at the drop of a pixel. And all there is lying around is pills. They keep me going, mind you, but there's something to be said for that juicy citrus stuff that keeps materialising for no good reason. But — sigh! — how's a P-person to get fat around here.

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2 PRINT' ";FORA=1TO42:PRINT:FORB=1TO99:N
EXT:IFR=19THENPRINT"                PRESENTS"
3 IFA=17THENPRINT"                DAVID BREAHME"
4 NEXT:POKE36878,15
13 PRINT" ";POKE36879,10:REMTITLE AND CT
EDITS
20 PRINT'                    __  __
30 PRINT"        *** PAC-MAN"*** "
35 PRINT"          -  --   - --"
38 PRINT" GUIDE PAC-MAN THOUGH  THE MAZE
 USING THE    FOLLOWING KEYS TO MOVE"
40 PRINT"      8:RIGHT    4:LEFT"
45 PRINT"      2:UP       0:DOWN"
50 FORB=1TO19:PRINT:FORB=1TO99:NEXT.IFA=
4THENPRINT"      P A C M A N "
53 PRINT"    SCORING AS FOLLOWS"
55 PRINT"        -=10 POINTS                =1
00 POINTS"
70 PRINT"          HIT A KEY'"
80 GET A$:IFR$=""THEN80
85 POKE36879,26
85 S1=1:B2=-1:S3=22:B4=-22:R0=140:BH=102
:PM=87:D1=46:G1=94
90 TL=200:K1=56:K2=57:K3=58:K4=59:B2=90:
CD=30720
110 IF R$="Y"THENGOSUB2000
115 T=0:B=0:P=8064:GOSUB1000
120 G=7680+INT(RND(1)*424)+40:POKE36878,
15:DN=36876
125 IFPEEK(B)<>D1THENG=G-1:POKEG+CD,0
130 T1$="000000":POKEG,G1:POKEG+CD,8
160 D=INT(RND(1)*4)+1
150 M=PEEK(197)
160 IFD=4THENC=B1
170 IFD=2THENC=B2
180 IFD=3THENC=B3
190 IFD=1THENC=B4
```

```
200 IFPEEK(B+C)=RSORPEEK(B+C)=BHTHEN140
205 IFPEEK(B+C)=PMTHENPRINT"  THE GHOS1
OOT YOU'!      ?":GOTO2500
210 POKEG,D1:POKEG+CD,4:IFRND(1)<=D5THEN
POKEB,D2:POKEG+CD,2
215 B=B+C:POKEG,B1:POKEG+CD,0:F=1
220 IFF=1THEN235
230 GOTO200
235 GOTO300
236 IFRND(1)<.25THEN140
250 GOTO200
300 REMYOUR MOVE+SCORE
310 POKEP,PM:POKEP+CD,5
320 M=PEEK(197)
330 IFM=K3THENX=B2
335 IFM=K4THENX=B1
340 IFM=K1THENX=B4
345 IFM=4BTHENX=B3
350 IFPEEK(P+X)=RSORPEEK(P+X)=BHTHEN300
355 IFPEEK(P+X)=B1THENB=B+10:Z=1
356 IFPEEK(P+X)=94THENPRINT"  THE GHOST
OOT YOU!      S":GOTO2500
360 IFPEEK(P+X)=D2THENB=B+100:Z=1
365 POKEP,32:P=P+X
370 POKEP,PM:POKEP+CB,5:F=D
375 IFZ=1THENPOKEDN,220:FORI=1TOB:NEXTI:
POKEDN,0:Z=0
380 PRINT"                                
B:PRINT "                TIME="RIGHT$(T1$,3
```

BUSTERS!

Controls:

Guide P Man around the maze, collecting energy pills and fruit.
2: Up Q: Down 8: Right 9: Left.

```
1000 REM SET UP MAZE
1010 PRINT"
1020 PRINT"
1030 PRINT"
1040 PRINT"
1050 PRINT"
1060 PRINT"
1070 PRINT"
1080 PRINT"
1090 PRINT"
1100 PRINT"
1110 PRINT"
1120 PRINT"
1130 PRINT"
1140 PRINT"
1150 PRINT"
1160 PRINT"
1170 PRINT"
1180 PRINT"
1190 PRINT"
1200 PRINT"
1210 PRINT"
1220 PRINT"SCORE:-"S
1225 RETURN
2120 PRINT"GOOD LUCK"
2300 Z9=36876
2505 POKE36878,12
2510 FOR I=255TO120STEP-1
2520 POKE36878,12:POKEZ9,I
2525 FORZ8=1TO5:NEXTZ8
2530 NEXTI
2535 POKE36878,0
3000 FORI=1TO500:NEXT I:PRINT"
3010 IF S>HSTHENHS=S
3015 PRINT"YOUR SCORE WAS"S
3020 IF S=HSTHENPRINT"A NEW HIGH SCORE"
:POKE198,0:INPUT"WHAT IS YOUR NAME?";
A$
3030 PRINT"HI-SCORE="HS
3035 PRINT"BY "A$
3040 POKE198,0:INPUT"ANOTHER GAME(Y/N)"
B$
3050 IF B$="Y"THEN 115
3055 PRINT"GOOD BYE.HOPE YOU"
3056 PRINT"ENJOYED PLAYING."
3060 END

READY.
```

FRUITBUSTERS! for Unexpanded Vic-20

WAITING

Adventure-meister STEVE KEATON looks behind the drapes of *The Wrath of Magra*, rescues a victim of *Twin Kingdom Valley* and finds a book . . . while with his other hand . . .

A NOTABLE new Spectrum title is Master Vision's *The Wrath of Magra*, the long-awaited climax to Camel Software's *Volcanic Dungeon* and *Black Crystal Trilogy Continent* saga. For a time it looked as if this epochal enterprise would never get to see the light of day, as Magra's software house folded the day just as she was entering the home straight. All looked lost until these gallant Elves down at Masertronic stepped in with a replete. Scrutinising a cut-price want they created an in-house adventure label, which allowed the phoenix-like *Magra* to live again.

BOOK AND TAPE

They arrived like the 7th Cavalry – results *Magra's* co-author Stuart Galloway. "Things started to turn rotten in January '94 and then promptly collapsed in April. The game was actually finished at that point. We'd even sent a few copies out. Developing it was straightforward, it was the manufacturing side of the business that finally broke the camel's back."

Magra is a remarkably accessible adventure. It's a romp of only moderate difficulty which sprawls across 3 tapes and comes bundled with *The Book Of Shadows*; a weighty 156-page tome that details pretty much the entire history of Cam[illegible] (imaginary Third Cont[illegible]

Along with a history lesson, it speculates on *Magra's* dodgy dentistry and even lists a mountain of spells to combat them. Delightfully illustrated with Trolls, Hobgoblins and the like, it's a great read. Few adventurers go to such extravagant lengths to establish their credibility.

Magra's prologue begins deep beneath the dark, in the dark, dank, worm-ridden vault of Dominion (a locale not unlike the BIG K other). In your guide to the Knight of the Star Jewel and Hero of the Volcanic Dungeon, you've been brought below by an elfin wizard who claims to have something of interest up his sleeve. Naturally you're curious. The old wizard guides you to a great wooden door and because a timorous guard for a key. The lookey hands it over with obvious apprehension. With a rusty groan the portal opens and the wizard ushers you in. Shackled to a dank slab is the Princess Edora, her once beautiful face aflame with sores and her hair awash with dandruff. The sight unbearingly makes you groan (not least because you've only just rescued the sexy woman from The Volcanic Dungeon). "She's possessed by the soul of Magra!" the wizard declares. This also comes as something of a shock as you thought the old witch had perished in the previous game! Twould seem that you've little choice but to venture back into the Black Mountains and slug it out with the old bat for a second time. Your reputation lies in mentioned the soul of the Princess Edora! hangs on the line.

As you might expect of a multi-level adventure you're unable to play it out of sequence. You'll need the data given to you at the end of episode 1 in order to play episode 2, and so on. There's no chance of jumping the gun. The game commences in the valley below Magra's Black Mountains, where armed with only a silver sword, shield and a couple of shirkers you must beg, borrow or steal all the materials you'll need for the mission. When safely arrived you must find your way into the caverns beneath the mountains. In episode 2 you must negotiate a dangerous labyrinth. A map is provided in the accompanying booklet to help you survive the journey. Chasms abound so one false move could spell NEW. Episode 3 takes you inside Magra's fortress, where you'll play a deadly game of hide-and-seek. Naturally the place is crawling with yuks and the game quota's frighteningly high. SAVE as you go, is the motto.

BIGGER, BETTER

It's a huge advance on both *Volcanic Dungeon* and *Black Crystal*, "I'd declares Stuart. "They were originally written in BASIC although they've been improved since then. I know that *Magra* looks fairly ordinary, but in fact it's very complex. There are little routines churning away in the background all the time. They consult your physical state, monitor the phase of the moon and check the time. They're constantly updating [illegible] regardless of what you're doing. The evolution routine used in episode 3 is particularly sophisticated. It enables the computer to decide exactly which kind of monster you'll meet as you wander about the fortress.

GFOR MAGRA

We're very pleased with the way it's turned out. The Spectrum tends to be a bit quirky the the rules we quite strict. You should never encounter anything invincible."

The screen display for tends episode is quite different. Only part 1 features the familiar status table / graphic window / description mode. The graphics consist mainly of simple the drawings and appear with only modest speed. They can be toggled off although there's the little point. The text descriptions are far the sparse to stand on their own. "During the 8 month lay-off we spent quite a lot of time trying to speed the graphics up," explains Stuart. "I think the results are perhaps 70% successful. There are a few disappointments. A certain amount of complexity had to be sacrificed from the original design. We were constantly condensing the routines and eventually managed to get them down to 12K, the h test still a compromise. In many ways graphics have killed adventure development. They've became too important the I guess you can't expect people to look at text all the time. Even Tolkein had illustrations. Personally I think the most important ingredient in an adventure is plot. That's what gives h individuality. Roy (Carroll) and I never intended Magra to be fiercely complex. The idea was to make h test to life (?). You begin as Joe Hero, rather inept and inexperienced than (as you become more familiar with *The Book of Shadows*) you grow wiser and stronger. It's certainly not traditional in the sense of then only being one solution. In fact we estimate that there's more than 3 million ways to complete the game! You test rush straight through it and kill Magra if you want, although you'll be missing the point."

MAGRA CLONES

Stuart assures me that *Magra* is destined to appear on a number of micros. "A version for the 64 is imminent," he claims, "and there are more in the pipeline. Stephen Kirk, one of the team, has just developed a highly sophisticated adventure generator. At the push of a button it can produce customised code for almost any machine. The Spectrum, CBM64, MSX, Apple ... you name h. It's a wonderful device, and it's totally flexible. A customised version of Magra at almost the touch of a button! Imagine that. It's development was made possible by the Master/Vision deal. Don't expect us to put h on sale straight! No test could afford to buy it! Believe me, it proved very expensive to develop. Still it's a state-of-the art tool and will really push us forward. The amount of time it saves is incredible! And it means we never have to work on the CBM64 again! That machine really is a pig to program! I'm sure the generator (we haven't christened it yet) will pay for itself very quickly."

BOOKQUEST

Peter Martin, from Washington, Tyne and Wear could doubtless do with such a machine himself. Apparently he's having trouble writing an adventure on his 64 and would the us to recommend a book or tape under £7.00 to bell him out. Well Pete, Big Colleague John (mine's a pint) Conquest recently declared the software *Exploring Adventures on the Commodore 64* to be a cut above the average, and I'm prepared to get behind that. Written by Peter Gerrard it'll cost you a mere £6.95. Alternatively if you can stretch your budget by a bit (if not there) Gilsoft's *Quill* utility for the 64 comes very highly recommended. It's a program development system without par and is well worth the £14.95 price tag. It's also worth checking our program listings. These can be typed in and customised for negligible cost. Let us know how you get on.

Finally, before I vanish in my customary puff of acrid green smoke, a quick word to Philip Milner of Tolladine, Worcester: if you think you can court favour with gratuitous, slobbering praise then you're quite perceptive, my friend. *Adulation* is always gratefully received. Ciao for now.

VALLEY VICTIM

Mark Finch, of Highbury in London, the problems. Frankly, I'm not surprised. Anybody that staples a postage stamp onto an envelope is bound to have problems!

Apparently he's inconvenced deep within *Twin Kingdom Valley* (from Bug-Byte) and wants help. 'I can't get past the ravine," he cries. "And I can't get out of the prison and I can't kill the gorilla." Not having much luck we you, Mark? Sounds the a job for the Dorlaiyarl in order to cross the ravine, you'll need the small wooden rod. Examine h carefully and then try waving h around. As for the prison, and you've got the right idea but your input's wrong. Try GIVE GUARD DIAMOND (simple when you know how isn't it?) That should get you out. Finally, leave the gorilla alone! Sheesh. Again have feelings too y'know. If the problems persist you'd do well to invest a £1.00 in the *Adventure Players' Guide* (also from Bug-Byte). This handy little booklet what it detailed look at the world and puzzles of *Twin Kingdom Valley* as well as giving tips on adventuring in general. Incidentally Spectrum owners can now enter the Valley to Bug-Byte have recently converted it for them micro. Initially entry was restricted to owners of the BBC/Electron and the Commodore 64.

TWIN KINGDOM VALLEY (Bug-Byte) Commodore 64, BBC B, Electron, £9.90, Spectrum 48K £7.95

THE WRATH OF MAGRA (Master/Vision) Spectrum 48K £9.95

THE QUILL (Gilsoft) Spectrum 48K, Commodore 64 £14.95

EXPLORING ADVENTURES ON THE COMMODORE 64 (published by Duckworth) £6.95

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Secrets Wait

No. 10 SPACE INVADERS (Taito /Ata

STEVE KEATON delves into t inner complexities of THE Classic Game . . .

('THUMP THUMP')
Few video games have tran scended the arcade to become part of contemporary culture

(' THUMP THUMP THUMP')
Hardly any have been so totally absorbed that their handles are now part of the English language

(' THUMPTHUMPTHUMP THUMP')
Only one can claim to have a soundtrack that's raised more hackles than the theme from Jaws

('PFFURTTT')

FOLLOWING ITS creation early 78 by Japanese developers Taito and its distribution via Bally Midway *Space Invaders* has become the generic term to describe any kind of electronic entertainment. Just think about that for a second. For a game to have that kind of monumental impact is simply staggering. It turned screen entertainment irrevocably on its head and quite literally led to a much reported coin shortage in the far east.

Today there can be absolutely no one that doesn't recognise a Space Invader when he sees one. The screen (black and white with a transparent colour overlay), chec a bloc with bomb-dropping aliens marching relentlessly toward lou slowly crumbling green bunker and one somewhat small and overworked laserbase is indelibly etched in all our minds. The object of the game (apart from just staying alive) was to crank up as many points as possible by wasting an alien Mother Ship that sporadically floats across the top of the screen. Heightening the drama was the infamous thumping heartbeat that builds to a crescendo as the dastardly aliens move in for the final stomp.

Contrary to popular belief though *Space Invaders* was NOT a mindless shoot 'em up. If it was its impact would never have been so huge. No, it was a game of skill and strategy that could raise the adrenalin of any player. Remember this was back in the good ol' days when people actually had to fight for their points instead of just hacking in witless invincibility POKEs!

Count to 22 . .

Foremost amongst these strategies as every Space Jock worth his salt will know was The Count. Mega scores in *Space Invaders* were not earned through rapid fire gonzo blasterama at even greased digits. They came from counting out the laser blasts. Space Aces would count out their shots until they reached number

ts of a Space Jock: it Trim and Count

22 then wait patiently carefully until the Mother Ship appeared. She'd then be tracked and zapped with the magic 23rd shot, thereby racking up a massive 300 point bonus the maximum possible for the Big M. Quite a score when you consider that the standard pay off is either 50, 100 or 150 points. The jackpot would appear again 15 shots later. Bag the Mother with every 15th shot and your points would begin to go through the roof! After the first sheet there's another count of 23 before you settle into a nice easy run of 15. If you think that this sounds nice and easy, just try counting down under the relentless pressure of an alien attack! It only takes one fluff to flush the whole strategy straight down the john.

In the Trim

Somewhat easier is The Trim. The object here is to slow down the descent rate of the entire invading army. Needless to say this is not achieved by carelessly picking-off of individual aliens but by calmly keeping the group from reaching the screen edge (which causes them to descend and thus quicken their pace). The Trim involves removing an entire wing at a time, thus effectively increasing the distance that they have to travel. This tactic undoubtedly the most obvious anti-invader move enables even the most cack-handed space cadet to clear some screens.

The third strategy — and the trickiest to execute effectively — is The Wall. It works on the premise that no invader, however mean and despicable, will bomb you on the next to last rung (that's the one above you, boss). Sure they'll drop bombs if you're only looking but that's actually just a bluff! Sit beneath 'em and grit your teeth and they'll go as soft as sausages. I guess theoretically that it's possible to take out an entire army this way, although I've never seen it done. Most nerves would doubtless crumble under the strain. Accuracy of course is paramount as you'll get no second chance. As you might imagine these Starfighters capable of merging all three strategies make pretty much assured of invader immortality. The Count offers ludicrously high scores, while The Trim and The Wall ensure longevity (of a sort).

A nice (and little known) twist in the game involved in a near graphic routine buried deep within the machine's code. It was magical reward for the invader elite from the Taito programmers. The routine would only occur if the final invader left onscreen was a recruit from one of the bottom two rows. Whittle down the invading aliens to one of these characters and you'll be treated to the extraordinary sight of an attacking alien leaving a white light slime trail! Needless to say the effect is rarely seen because the requirements are so difficult to meet. If you don't believe me, go unearth a Space Invader and try and knock out the top row without hitting the bottom. It demands much skill and perfect anticipation. You'll need to lead the advancing alien line and time your shots in such a way that they collide with the poor sods on the upper tier. *Manic Miner*? Pah! That's kid stuff compared to this!

Space Invaders not only revolutionised the arcade scene, it also brought the video game home with a vengeance! The news that Atari were to launch it as a VCS cart caused a rush on 2600 consoles. Indeed this was the game that finally forced me to dig deep into my pockets and shell out for one. Even today I reckon it as one of their most successful conversions. The addictive menace of the original is authentically conveyed, even though the two games actually play very differently. In VCS form the invading army has been reduced from 55 Uigs per sheet to 36 and all have been redrawn. Only their table manners remain the same. Neither the Count nor The Wall carry much weight here, which leaves only The Trim as a workable strategy. The aliens attack faster and your laser shots are slower. Arcade players were forced to do a drastic rethink.

The cart boasts an astonishing 112 variations (an unbroken record) and incorporates such thrills as moving shields, zigzagging and rapid fire bombs and (my favourite) all time variation) invisible invaders! I've always thought that anybody that willingly sits before a blank screen to battle invisible invaders is rather more than just severely shell-shocked. Atari (obviously hyped up by their success) then went on to produce the ultimate home version for their 400/800 computer range. Once again the coin-op strategies didn't amount to a hill of beans, but the play was dazzling.

Since then *Space Invaders* has gone on to become the most shamelessly ripped off game of all time. Grossly inferior versions proliferate for almost every machine (hands up those with a *Space Invaders* wristwatch!) and this has caused it to be frequently and undeservedly rubbished by the less enlightened youth of today. As Big K however, we remember and thus know better.

(PTOOIIEE PTOOIIE FAPH!)

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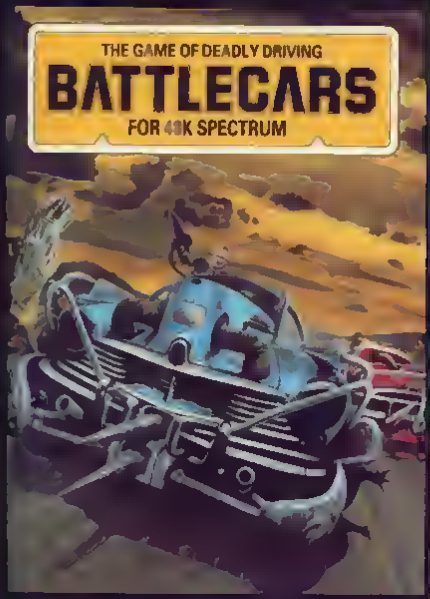

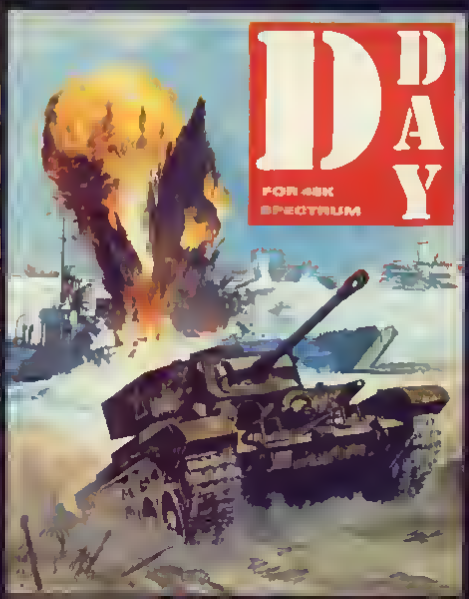

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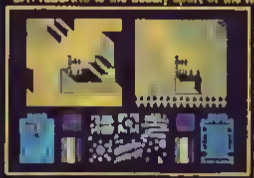

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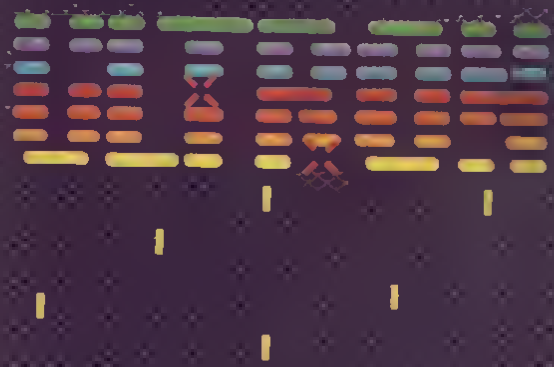

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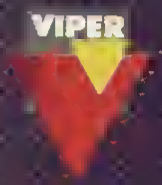

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One of these men is an an imagine programmer working for Iron Pillings. The other is either Xitkins or The Shadow. But which is which? Will we ever know?

PROTECTION RACKET

The Protector! feature in issue was very clever and useful. But listing two. If you set the line in the bottom half of the screen back to (before CLS or INPUT statements) is possible to put a STOP stat in INPUT and then see the listing the screen. The Protector! supposed to stop the. So how you stop anyone putting the ST command in INPUT?

PHIL JOHNSON
Prescot
Merseyside.

• *It's dead easy, Phil. You can't Protector! is intended to keep the casual nosey parker. Not a lot can be done to put off the fully fledged saboteur — like you!*

MINER LIVES

Please advise me on how to get everlasting lives in *Manic Miner* (Spectrum). Also which is the best Star Trek game for the Spectrum?

ALBERT FINDLEY,
Cleethorpes,
South Humberside.

Please send me POKE commands for everlasting lives on *Manic Miner* for the ZX Spectrum. Please hurry every day is frustration!

EARL RONALD TAYLOR,
(No address — no £££'s!)

'Oh, all right then. Shovel in this Miner's leader just up to line 30. The type in, POKE 36136,0. Now press ENTER and RUN, and start the tape again. Dig?

FLEE THE FLOOD

Here's a game I wrote in BASIC for Spectrum 16/48K. The idea is that there has been a flood and your house is drifting towards a forest. You have to pass 100 areas before you reach dry land.

LEE MACEY,
Hornchurch,
Essex.

```
 10 BORDER 0 : BRIGHT 1 : PAPER 0
110 LET a=0 : n=0
120 LET n = 0
130 LET b = 0
140 LET c = 0
150 LET d = 0
160 LET e = 0
170 LET f = 1
180 LET g = 12
190 PRINT " " INT (27*RND ),
200 POKE 23693, 0
210 PRINT AT 21, 0;
220 PRINT AT 0, 31, "
230 PRINT AT 10, x-2 "
240 PRINT AT 11, x "
250 PRINT AT 0, 31
270 LET n = n+1
280 IF n = 100 THEN PRINT "YOU
HAVE REACHED 100, LEND STOP"
290 LET n = 104 THEN LET l = 0
300 LET a = d
310 LET b = c
320 LET c = b
330 LET d = a
340 LET e = f
350 PRINT AT 10, x-2,
360 PRINT AT 11,x; "
370 IF x < 2 = 0 AND x<= 0+t THE
N GO TO 410
372 BEEP .2, 0
380 IF INKEY$ = "0" THEN LET X
=X-1
390 IF INKEY$ = "P" THEN LET X
=X+1
400 GO TO 180
410 PRINT AT 11, x-1, "CRASH"
420 BEEP .2, 0 : "SCORE = ",n
430 PRINT AT 21, 0, "PRESS ANY K
EY TO TRY AGAIN"
440 IF INKEY$ = "" THEN GO TO 4
50
450 RUN
```

Here's a tip for Commodore owners everywhere. Whilst loading type in the normal load procedure. After S — type a colon and press SHIFT and RUN/STOP. Your program will run automatically.

FEARGHAL PATTERWELL,
Clonakilty
County Cork

P.S. BIG K is top of the list (geddit?)

• *Well, Fearghal, that one wasn't much better than a POKE in the eye with a sharp stick, was it?*

LETTERBASE 5 contained a request from A. Gatner for unlimited lives in Ocean's *Mean Alert*. The closest you can get is 99 lives! Enter the following in the basic program at the beginning, just before the Rand USR. POKE 42404 63.

By the way 63 is HEX for 99. You can have any number of lives below this number.

BRYAN JOHNSON
Sunderland,
Tyne and Wear

BRING ME MY PEDESTAL, PLEASE

Tell Steven Craig (LETTERBASE 6) that until he has read 'The 24 part Home Computer Course' he has no right to call Big K boring. If he does read the above he may find himself compelled to paint all his BIG Ks gold, stick them on a pedestal and worship them occasionally.

THE BLACK TURNIP
Mixenden,
Halifax

• *Listen Turnip. Craig's point was that he actually LIKED BIG K. Incidentally, have you tried Clive Sinclair's 1 000 Exciting Nights of Exercises in Machine Code? Published by Messrs Yawn and Scratch. It's a really good read. Write and tell us about the most fatuous and boring computer book you've ever had the pleasure of putting down.*

TERBASE LETTERB

G edited by NICKY XIKLUNA

"WE CAN'T WIN" CORNER

I typed Jet Set Willy – The Last Poke (LETTERBASE 7 – Mark Charlton) into my friend's Spectrum. When the game loaded, we discovered that it does not suck you up walls or give infinite lives. Is there a statement that does this?

GARRY NAYLOR,
Skipton
North Yorkshire.

I am writing to say how pleased I was to see *Jet Set Willy* – The last Poke – in the October edition! I've been looking for something like this for ages. Has anyone got a similar code for *Manic Miner* on the Spectrum?

PAUL GOSLING,
Waltham Abbey
Essex.

SNOBS FIGHT BACK

I am writing in response to Trevor O'Grady's in LETTERBASE 8, Computer Snob Wars – Early Warning. Why shouldn't the Spectrum be persecuted for its useless keyboard? Or the C64 for its naff BASIC? Incidentally, should the figure '64' be taken as representing its 64K RAM? Nonsense. The 64 has only roughly half of that usable in BASIC. The figure must surely represent the year that the 64 was designed! I do agree with old Trev on his point about the BBC, though. It got the best BASIC – when it came out. And now? It's surprising that it doesn't use valves! Thank you for letting me get this off my chest.

MARC TEALE,
Eccleshill,
Bradford.

OR DO THEY?

I completely agree with Trevor O'Grady's dislike of the computer snob wars. I'm fed up with "Spectrums and Commodores".

I want to warn people about a few Commodore games that I've bought. The worst of these is Rabbit's Adventure Pack 1. It is the most boring game I have ever seen. There are no graphics at all. Worse of all you can break into listing and read it. Quicksilva's *Aquaplane* and *Harrier Attack* are also thoroughly boring.

ROBERT WILLOUGHBY
Dunsford,
Devon.

TONY BENYON

UPPER CLASS TWITTER

Just a line to say that after playing *Elite* for 18 days (well, not all the time) I have now reached the rank of Elite.

BRETT A. WRIGHT
Silendine Neak,
Huddersfield.

GRID STUNNER

Past! Want to know how to plan Spectrum screen layouts cheaply? Sling out your graph paper and Print n Plot pad and get a Quadrille exercise book from W H Smith's educational area.

It has 40 pages, printed both sides with a fine grid of 33 × 26 squares. Size of page 205 × 165mm. Size of squares 5 × 6mm. Price 22p. Best that!

FRANK ADEY
Wolverhampton

SORRY – YOUR (INTER)FACE WON'T FIT

Is it possible to use my Amstrad monitor with my Spectrum? What do I need? Where can I get it? How much will it cost?

S.A. SCHILD
Camberley
Surrey

• No. Nothing. You can't. It doesn't. Your only option is to find someone who knows what he's doing with a soldering iron.

DEFEND SMALL MICROS & FROGS

I've been reading BIG K since issue two. It has lots of colour, and is humorous and interesting. Many computer publications on sale are only fit for use as toilet rolls (and even then, are rough and expensive).

I object to TT's verdict on *FROGGER* (issue 7). I'm quite good at it – but I'm not an "obnoxious 9 year old"!!, I, too, like pond life, but surely the object is to save frogs, not squash them?

Finally, a few years back I seem to remember seeing a machine called a Commodore Max in a mail order catalogue. As far as I can remember it had a 2K memory, colour and sound and a touch-sensitive keyboard. (like the Intellivision hand controls). It sold alongside the C64 etc. Also, I definitely saw the Atari 5200 in another catalogue. You said it was never sold in the U.K.

CHRIS BOWNS,
Hartlepool,
Cleveland.

The 5200 never was sold in the UK – off-shelf, that is. That's not to say the overzealous hopeful importer didn't burn his fingers on an on-the-self basis. Or maybe you were looking at a US catalogue? As far as squashing frogs, clearly I've been getting the wrong message all this time. T.T.

ShOrc HORROR!

I decided to buy *Orc Attack* after reading your review (August issue 8). I sent off the cheque, waited 21 days and sure enough, through my [illegible] *Orc Attack* came. After a few hours hacking, I thought to myself [illegible] about as the same *Orc Attack* as that of the Big K review? Hardly. I re-read it. I checked the cartridge. Yup. *Orc Attack* on there. [illegible] *Orc Attack* on the box and instructions. It even says *Orc Attack* on the [illegible]

So why have I got rocks instead of spears? Why do I have a form to buy? Why have I only got one screen? Why is it that [illegible] many lives I gain, I get murdered in round nine?

P.S. Why have you got such a long address?

SIMON QUIRKE,
Wembley,
Middx.

• *Um, I don't know how to tell you this Simon, but buy the [illegible] is a piece of slang that Tony Tyler swiped from the RAF circa World [illegible] 2. It means spreading yourself thin over the landscape – ie being the [illegible] to go and push up the daisies. However, you're right about the spe[illegible] There isn't one. Glad to see you're on your toes.*

There IS only one screen in Orc Attack, but different [illegible] of rampaging attackers. As for getting killed on level nine – the fellows at Creative Sparks say "keep trying".

P.S. 'Cos with a name as long as mine – you deserve it.

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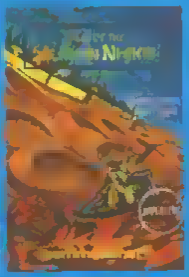

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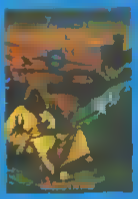

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...Who will be the survivors? MIKE GOLD ....

License Those Wash-out Blues Away

BY NOW most nice nuts have slapped down their Christmas boodle and the only question left is "Who is likely to survive the Wash Out of 1984?"

Well the answer won't be coming for awhile but we'll take this opportunity to check the water.

The big trend in software this past year has been in the realm of licensed games, and those companies that bet on the right properties just might make it to 1985.

It isn't easy. In 1983 Atari bet the house on such movies as *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *E.T.* — two of the most successful films in history. It seemed like a good idea at the time, too bad they became the biggest turkeys in videogame history.

So 1984's corporate players are being slightly more judicious and are backing their bets with huge promotion budgets.

Two likely winners — Fox's Star's *Spy Vs. Spy* based upon the long running feature in *Mad Magazine* and Activision's *Ghostbusters*.

What makes these games successful is that they are extremely fun to play. That doesn't seem like a major revelation does it? Ha! Ever try to play Atari's *E.T.* or *Raiders of the Lost Ark*?

Spy Vs. Spy follows the lead set by the popular *B.C.'s Quest for Tires*. Both games take relatively simply cartoon line art that eat up a tiny amount of RAM. The characters you see on the screen actually resemble the ones you've seen in print.

TOP DESIGN

Ghostbusters is another matter. It is Activision's first entry into the world of media licenses and they put David Crane — their top designer — on the project. Not too complicated but not offensively simple. *Ghostbusters* is better than the movie in my humble opinion.

If ColecoVision survives the Wash Out it will be because of four highly popular games: *Tarzan, Start Trek, Star Wars* and *War Games* — all successful licensed properties. Parents hate plopping $100.00 down on a game unit that gathers dust and they're hardly likely to throw down another $20.00 every time little Junior sees a fancy box of software — unless Junior is trying the darn thing. So far these licenses have kept the ColecoVision in use.

Not all licenses are based upon media properties. For example Atari licensed from Namco three of their very best selling games: *Pac Man, Dig Dug* and *Pole Position*. But when Jack Tramiel bought the company these licenses *automatically* expired — I wonder if he knew that? — and the rights were snatched up by Data Soft.

ARCH-RIVAL

Tramiel's latest gift to Commodore's gang. As previously reported, when Tramiel bought up Atari, he dropped the lion's share of all production of Atari-soft games for the C64, which just happens to be Atari's arch-rival. Well, you'll never guess what Data Soft started manufacturing the minute they got the licenses to these three winners.

If you're keeping a running count, the latest score is: Commodore 2, Atari 0.

Atari, by the way, claims to be continuing production on the 800XL despite massive price reductions. They are maintaining a full manufacturing schedule in the Asian and Irish plants, even though the selling price in the States is dropping to around $120.00.

Commodore is experiencing a few headaches. They're safe from this year's big Wash-Out but the two new units haven't exactly set the world on fire and sales of the C64/64 have dropped by about 10%. People simply want more power from their micros and for new thrills they're looking to Apple and Tandy — and to IBM, if they're really dedicated to squeezing a lot of home business use out of their machine.

NOT MOVING

The lack of power is likely to do Coleco in. The ColecoVision unit is still well liked — a recent survey in *Boy's Life* magazine put the CV on top of the popularity chart with 40.8% (second place, the Atari 5200 with 36.6%) — but the Adam simply is not moving.

The first clear indication that Coleco might be giving up on the Adam came in early November when Coleco finally got out of their contract with a Japanese firm that made these noisy, tedious and basically offensive printers. Coleco has yet to replace the printer with one made by a different company and without a printer the Adam is useless.

It would be a shame if the Adam takes ColecoVision down with it. CV software is still strong when compared to that of other dedicated computers — it outsells all other formats except the Atari 2600 and there is more best selling software out there for the CV than for any other unit except the aforementioned 2600.

If I were a betting man I'd say Coleco will be out of the computer business by mid 1985 if not sooner.

STATESIDE CHATTER

Among the healthy old timers still selling strongly are *Pitfall II* (and *Pitfall* for Coleco), *Q-Bert and Frogger* and for general use micros, both *Flight Simulator* packages continue to be blockbusters.

Newcomers to the heights of popularity? Coleco's *Football* game is strong in the States (our football is a bit weird by UK standards, so if you insist on to this game, be prepared to step into a whole different culture) and Activision's *Ko-Boom* for the Atari 2600 and 5200.

And the best-sellers on the home computer front? The adventure games *Seven Cities of Gold* from Electronic Arts and Data Soft's *Bruce Lee*, the strategy games *Raid Over Moscow* from Assaga and *Archon II* from Electronic Arts and the arcade adaptation *Beyond Castle Wolfenstein*, from Muse.

Archon II is the only game that is up there alongside such durables as the two *Flight Simulators*, *Ultima II* and *Wizardry*, all of whom have been constant sellers for more than a year. But *Raid Over Moscow* looks like a winner — a well received game that might take an heightened popularity with the re-election of President Reagan.

After all, there are all kinds of war games.

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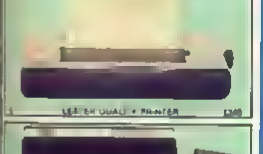

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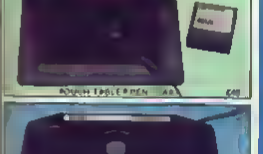

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```
10 PRINT"  POKE53281,0:POKE53280,0
15 PRINT"                    PLEASE WA
IT"
20 POKE52,48:POKE56,48:CLR:POKE56334,PEE
K(56334)AND254:POKE1,PEEK(1)AND251
30 FORT=0TO211:POKET+12288,PEEK(T+53248
):NEXT
40 POKE1,PEEK(1)OR4:POKE56334,PEEK(56334
)OR1
50 FORT=0TO55:READA:POKE12288+512+T,A:NE
XT
60 DATA24,24,60,126,219,24,16,126
65 DATA126,60,24,219,126,60,24,24
70 DATA8,25,51,255,255,51,25,8
75 DATA16,152,204,255,255,204,152,16
80 DATA24,24,24,60,126,255,231,195
85 DATA195,102,60,255,255,60,102,195
90 DATA24,24,24,24,60,126,255,255
 0b GOSUB7000:REM***TITLE***
110 PRINT
```

The joyous news flashes through on the FTL receiver. The war is over! Five years of life-or-death struggle against the Quarpoids, and at last you can fly home in your scout-ship to the welcoming arms of Earth. There's only one problem — both sides have sown every quadrant between here and Terra with neutron mines. You have a scanner which shows you how many mines surround your current position, it just doesn't show you exactly where they are. You can run a quadrant scan, but it'll only give you a quick look. Can you get across the quadrant map to the hyperspace tunnel (shown by the cross) without being vapourised? Don't forget to refuel at stars for extra points.

Controls: W: Up Z: Down A: Left Z: Right N: Quadrant scan

```
120 PRINT                          ENTER SKILL LEV
EL 1-5"
130 PRINT'              ":INPUTSK
140 IFSK<1ORSK>5THEN130
150 POKE53272,28
160 GOSUB6000:REM***SET UP DISPLAY***
170 GOSUB5000
180 PRINT" "
190 PRINT"                 *******END OF GAME****
***"
200 PRINT"                    YOURE SCORE WAS";SC
220 IFSC>HITHENHI=SC:PRINT"                      TNE
 HIGH SCORE 18";HI
230 PRINT"
R GAME Y/N?"                                      ANOTE
240 GETA$:IFA$<>"Y"THEN240
250 GOTO110
300 PRINT" "
310 PRINT"
R-DRIVE"                                          HYPE
320 FORT=0TO255:POKE53281,T:NEXT:POKE532
81,0:SK=SK+1:SC=SC+50
330 GOSUB6005
5000 POKEP,C:POKECO,1
5005 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN5035
5007 GOSUB5500
5010 IFA$="W"THENPOKEP,32:P=P-40:CO=CO-4
0:C=64:X1=X1 40:X2=X2-40
5015 IFA$="Z"THENPOKEP,32:P=P+40:CO=CO+4
0:C=65:X1=X1+40:X2=X2+40
5020 IFA$="A"THENPOKEP,32:P=P-1:CO=CO-1:
C=66:Y1=Y1-1:Y2=Y2-1
5025 IFR$="D"THENPOKEP,32:P=P+1:CO=CO+1:
C=67:Y1=Y1+1:Y2=Y2+1
5030 IFA$="H"ANDH=1THENPOKE53281,2:FORT=
1TO1700:NEXT:POKE53281,0:H=0
5035 GOSUB5200
5040 IFR$="="THENGOSUB5300
5045 IFPEEK(P)=68THENLV=LV-1:POKE53281,7
:FORT=1TO100:NEXT:POKE53281,0
5050 IFPEEK(P)=69THENSC=SC+15
5055 IFPEEK(P)=70ANDE<9TNEHE=E+1
5060 IFPEEK(P)=91THEN300
5065 IFLV<1THENRETURN
5070 PRINT" SCORE";SC;TAB(12)".SCANNER"
;SN;TAB(25)" ENERGY";E
5075 PRINT"                    LIVES";LV;TAB(20)
LEVEL";SK
5080 IFX1>1984THENX1=1984:X2=2023
5085 IFX1<1144THENX1=1144:X2=1183
5090 IFY1<1984THENY1=1984:Y2=1144
5095 IFY1>2023TNENY1=2023:Y2=1183
5100 IFP=X1-1THENP=P+1:CO=CO+1
5110 IFP=X2+1THENP=P-1:CO=CO-1
5120 IFP=Y1+40THENP=P-40:CO=CO-40
5130 IFP=Y2-40THENP=P+40:CO=CO+40
5135 GOTO5000
5200 REM***SCANNER***
5202 U=0:D=0:L=0:R=0
5205 IFPEEK(P-40)=68TNENU=U+1:GOTO5215
5210 U=0
5215 IFPEEK(P+40)=68THEND=D+1:GOTO5225
5220 D=0
5225 IFPEEK(P-1)=68THENL=L+1:GOTO5235
5230 L=0
5235 IFPEEK(P+1)=68THENR=R+1:GOTO5245
5240 R=0
5245 SN=U+D+L+R
5250 RETURN
5300 REM***ZAPPER***
5305 IFE=0THENRETURN
5320 IFPEEK(P-40)=68THENPOKECO-40,7:FORT
=1TO200:NEXT:POKEP-40,32:SC=SC+5
5325 IFPEEK(P+40)=68THENPOKECO+40,7:FORT
=1TO200:NEXT:POKEP+40,32:SC=SC+5
5330 IFPEEK(P-1)=68THENPOKECO-1,7:FORT=1
TO200:NEXT:POKEP-1,32:SC=SC+5
5335 IFPEEK(P+1)=68THENPOKECO+1,7:FORT=1
TO200:NEXT:POKEP+1,32:SC=SC+5
5345 E=E-1:SN=0:RETURN
5500 REM***REEP***
5510 POKE54296,15:POKE54276,17
5512 POKE54273,36:POKE54272,85:FORT=0TO3
:POKE54278,150:NEXT
5514 POKE54276,0:POKE54296,0
5516 RETURN
6000 SC=0:E=9:LV=3
6005 PRINT" ":P=2004:C=64:CO=54276:SN=0:
X1=1984:X2=2023:Y1=2004:Y2=1164
6010 POKE53265,PEEK(53265)AND239
6015 FORT=55376TO55415:POKET,7:NEXT:H=1
6020 FORT=1104TO1143:POKET,82:NEXT
6025 FORT=0TOSK*50:A=FN R(N):POKE1144+A,
68:POKE55416+A,0:NEXT
6030 FORT=0TO15:A=FN R(N):POKE1144+A,69:
POKE55416+A,14:NEXT
6035 FORT=0TO9:A=FN R(N):POKE1144+A,70:P
OKE55416+A,8:HEXT
6040 A=INT(500*RND(1))+1:POKE1144+A,91:P
OKE55416+A,1
6045 POKEP,C:POKECO,1
6050 POKE53265,PEEK(53265)OR16
6055 RETURN
7000 PRINT" ":H1=500
7005 PRINT"                    KEYBOARD CONTROLS
ONLY "
7010 PRINT"
 "
7015 PRINT"
7020 PAINT"                    .R.I.O.N.
7025 PRINT"                                  '
7030 PRINT"                  *             * "
7035 PRINT"                *     "
7040 PRINT"                              * "
 "                  *   *                  *
7045 PRINT"                    PRESS SPACE
BAR "
7050 GETA$:IFA$<>" "THEN7050
7055 DEF FN R(N)=INT(880*RND(1))+1
7060 RETURN

READY.
```

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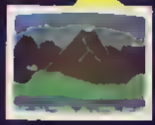

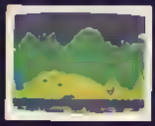

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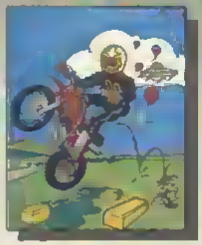

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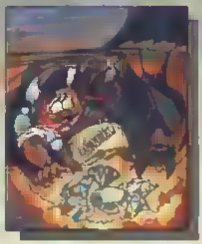

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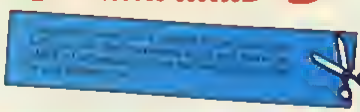

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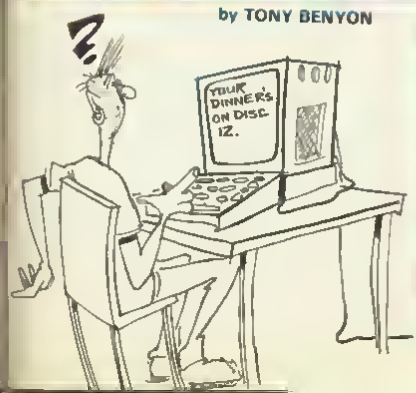

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